# ISSUES IN CHINESE BUDDHIST TRANSMISSION AS SEEN THROUGH THE *LIDAI FABAO JI* (RECORD OF THE DHARMA-JEWEL THROUGH THE AGES)

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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# ABSTRACT

This dissertation is based on the *Lidai fabao ji* (Record of the Dharma-Jewel Through the Ages), a sectarian history of Buddhism in China composed by the disciples of the monk Wuzhu (714-774), the founder of the Bao Tang school of Chan/Zen in Sichuan.

The purpose of my study is to examine problems surrounding Buddhist transmission in China from the 4th-8th centuries. I compare the *Lidai fabao ji* version of Buddhist history to versions in other sources to elucidate conceptions of the transmission of Buddhist authority. I focus on transmission of the Buddhist precepts and include a survey of the precepts in the 4th-5th centuries. I also discuss the role the precepts played in Buddhist church-state relations.

The doctrines of the "Southern School" of Chan to which the Bao Tang claimed allegiance reinterpreted the Buddhist precepts. The antinomian implications of the doctrine of sudden enlightenment subverted the rationale for traditional Buddhist scriptures and practices, but it also created the need for another basis of authoritative transmission. The Southern School and its offshoots sought legitimacy by creating a lineage of patriarchs who were said to have passed down transmission from the Buddha himself.

Disparate modes of discourse are juxtaposed within the *Lidai fabao ji*, and I suggest that this reflects a broader transition. Both the interregnum of the Empress Wu (r. 684-705) and the rebellion of An Lushan (755) were followed by factional conflicts at court that redefined the configurations of Tang dynasty (618-906) authority. Following the *Lidai fabao ji* representations of spiritual legitimacy through the course of Chinese Buddhist history, I connect these representations with Tang political conditions.

From a wider perspective, this is a study of the vexed nature of Buddhist transmission itself. The conditions of the Bao Tang exemplify a perennial Buddhist dilemma, that of

the instability of the transmission of teachings (Dharma) by an ordained community (Saṅgha) that is predicated upon individual experience of truth (Buddha/*bodhi*). The Chan challenge, maintaining a heritage within the orthodoxy of absolute immediacy, is but one form of this dilemma.

For Wuzhu 無住

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## Abbreviations and Conventions of Usage

Chinese Official Histories are referred to by *juan*, followed by page number in the Zhonghua shuju editions, for example: *Hou Han shu* 88. 2922.

*Daozang* = The Daoist canon, references according to Schipper's numbering system

*Hōbōgirin* = *Hōbōgirin, Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhism d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises*

Mochizuki = *Mochizuki Bukkyō dai jiten* 望月仏教大辞典

Morohashi = *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢話辞典

Nakamura = *Bukkyōgō daijiten* 仏教語大辞典

P. = Dunhuang manuscripts in the Pelliot collection, Bibliothèque Nationale

Romanization: Due to quotations from sources in which different romanization systems are used, there will be discrepancies in the romanization of Chinese, Sanskrit, and Pali terms. For direct quotes I retain the romanization of the source, while in summaries of source material I maintain consistency with my previous usages. In citing modern Chinese scholars, I use Pinyin unless the scholar is more generally known by the Wade-Giles romanization of his name (i.e. Jan Yün-hua).

S. = Dunhuang manuscripts in the Stein collection, British Library

Sanskrit and Pali words that have been identified by Roger Jackson as included in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* will not be italicized. See Jackson 1982.

*T.* = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 太正新修大蔵経

*QTW* = *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文

*ZZ.* = *Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō* 大日本続蔵経

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The *Lidai fabao ji* is a long-lost Chan Buddhist text of the late eighth century that was recovered early in this century from a cave-temple at Dunhuang, on the edge of the Gobi desert. Previously, only its name and damaged reputation had survived, for it was remembered as a fraudulent history by a collateral branch of Chan, the Bao Tang 保唐 (Protect the Tang Dynasty) school.[1] The Bao Tang monastery had been situated near the city of Chengdu 成都 in Jiannan 劍南 (modern Sichuan 四川), the southwest frontier region of China. Until the rediscovery of the text, the sole work of the Bao Tang school was known only through critical comments found in the writings of Sichuan contemporaries Shenqing 神清 (d. *ca.* 814) and Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), who discredited the veracity of its claims and its doctrinal soundness, respectively. The Chan syncretist Shenqing, who admittedly had sectarian motivations, must have expressed his negative opinion very soon after the *Lidai fabao ji* was written.[2] However, the modern Chan historian John McRae likewise notes that among texts of early Chan, regarding "patent fabrications and questionable attributions," the *Lidai fabao ji* "is undoubtedly the most egregious of all."[3]

I would like to suggest instead that the fabrications in the *Lidai fabao ji* be read not as inaccurate Chan history but as faithful reflections of a crisis in the meaning of spiritual transmission in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Modern scholarship in Asia and the West has done and will continue to do much to distinguish fact and fiction in accounts

[1] The name of the school is taken from the name of the monastery Wuzhu occupied.

[2] In his *Beishan lu* 北山錄 (Record of North Mountain), *ca.* late 8th century, *T.* 52 (2113) 611b.

[3] McRae 1986: 11.

of lineage and transmission from this period. However, it is by now also customary to recognize that fact-finders often reveal more about their own world than that of their apparent subjects, and the "fault-lines" of fiction may admit otherwise invisible reflections from the past.

The *Lidai fabao ji* fabrication most frequently singled out for criticism is the story that in 692, the robe verifying the monk Huineng's 慧能 status as sixth Chan patriarch was voluntarily sent by Huineng to the empress Wu Zetian 武則天 in Luoyang. The empress is said to have bestowed it on the monk Zhishen 知詵, who was thus claimed to be the seventh patriarch in the lineage of the Bao Tang school. One of the aims of the present study is to reinvest this key transmission claim with some of the dignity of its presumption.

This study is based upon the cast of characters and the historical events that appear, or are implicated, in the *Lidai fabao ji* account of the place of the Bao Tang school within the context of a chronicle of Buddhism in China. I also attempt to trace the paths by which a monk's robe briefly became such a hotly contested item as to provoke murder and intrigue, if the tales are to be credited. That, of course, is the question. In what sense are these tales to be credited? In order to capture the polemical spirit of our inquiry, I would like to quote an aggrieved comment that, although made in the twentieth century, could perhaps have been made in the eighth:

> If the true patriarchal power lay only in the robe, then the Empress Wu, as well as Chih-hsien, T'ang Ho-shang, and Wu-shiang [sic] must all have been patriarchs. Further, would Hui-neng have given up his robe, and consequently his power, at the mere request of Empress Wu? It is obvious that the patriarchal succession involves more than the simple handing down of a robe. Hui-neng was a Patriarch without the robe; even with it,

Empress Wu was not.[4]

Any criticism of the *Lidai fabao ji* version of succession inevitably raises the inconvenient question: where *did* true patriarchal power lie? The doctrinal, ideological and historical aspects of this question cannot be addressed separately, for each implicates the others. Doctrinally, the reconciliation of inherent Buddha-nature and temporal transmission of spiritual authority is as slippery as the reconciliation of the theory of anātman (no-self) and the theory of karma (the morally charged momentum of past action that shapes the actor). Spiritual lineage and spiritual discipline became theoretically equally problematic for so-called "Southern School" Chan, and yet the relative attention given these two aspects is the inverse of that of previous Buddhist discourse. Among Chan schools of the late Tang, the "performative" significance of the rhetoric of genealogy was increasingly developed, while the hagiographic value of accounts of spiritual athleticism slowly atrophied. Transmission of the letter of the Law, of the moral, ritual, and exegetical traditions, were dominant factors determining succession in the early centuries of Buddhism's involvement in China, but beyond the historical watershed that this study attempts to delineate, the vehicle of transmission becomes as ipseitically unstable as Nagasena's carriage.[5]

The transmission of the patriarchal robe in the *Lidai fabao ji* highlights the instability of received Buddhist criteria of authority and morality. That account, which we shall consider at length in Chapters Four and Five, symbolically intertwines many of the issues most problematic for the nascent Chan ethos -- magic from the Western Regions versus

[4] Seo 1969: 49.

[5] Nāgasena was a Buddhist teacher said to have instructed the Indo-Greek King Milinda (r. *ca.* 163-150 B.C.E.). Nāgasena illustrated the doctrine of no-self by drawing the king's attention to his own carriage, demonstrating that the carriage could not be identified by any one of its constituent parts and was merely a designation for the composite. See *Milindapañha* (The Questions of King Milinda) II. 1, 1-2, Rhys Davids, trans., [1890] 1992: 40-46.

the doctrine of no-thought, the Saṅgha chorus upholding the precepts against antinomian individualism, the place of ritual within a "formless" teaching, and the delicate relationship between temporal and spiritual legitimacy. These will all reappear in due course, but let me turn now to a preliminary introduction of the text and its background.

The *Lidai fabao ji* 曆代法寶記 (Record of the Dharma[6]-Jewel Through the Ages) was composed around 780 by an anonymous disciple or disciples of the Bao Tang founder Wuzhu 無住 (714-774). Wuzhu claimed Dharma descent from the charismatic Korean Chan master Wuxiang 無相 ( 684-762), who was well known as the founder of the Jingzhong 淨眾 school, but the Bao Tang cannot be traced as an independent line beyond the generation of Wuzhu's immediate disciples. The *Lidai fabao ji* was preserved in three nearly complete manuscripts and five smaller fragments among the Stein, Pelliot and Ishii collections of Dunhuang materials.[7] Except in one instance there is no way to know the circumstances in which the text survived until the eleventh century, when the cave-temple cache was sealed.[8] The manuscripts and fragments are not substantially different, which suggests that they may be relatively faithful to the Sichuanese original. The *Lidai fabao ji* thus provides a rare opportunity to shed light on the ways in which historical contingencies shape sectarian identity. The fact that the Bao Tang school was so short-lived and its remains were hermetically sealed makes it for all its fabrications a more accurate reflection of the Buddhist world of the eighth and ninth centuries, the so-called

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[6] Dharma is not easily rendered by any single English term, although it is usually translated as "Law." In order not to exclude any of its meanings -- legitimate teaching, moral, epistemological and ontological law, and the true nature of reality -- I will leave it untranslated throughout.

[7] P. 2125, P. 3717 and S. 516 are nearly complete; P. 3727, S. 5916, S. 1611, S. 1776 and the "Ishii" text are fragments. For my translations I used 1) the *Taishō* edition, *T.* 51 (2075) 179a - 196b, based on S. 516 with notes on the variations found in P. 2125, and 2) Yanagida Seizan's 1976 edition of the text based on P. 2125, with his annotated Japanese translation.

[8] The exception is the listing of the *Lidai fabao ji* in a catalogue of the library of the Sanjie 三界 monastery at Dunhuang, the *Jian yiqie ruzangjing mulu* 見一切入藏經目錄 written by the monk Daozhen 道真 in 934. The catalogue is now in the Beijing library collection, see published edition in Oda 1989: 555-576; the *Lidai fabao ji* occurs on p. 560.

"golden age" of Chan, than the authoritative eleventh and twelfth century accounts. Indeed, the *Lidai fabao ji* is perhaps no more untruthful, merely less successful.

The *Lidai fabao ji* is one of a scant handful of Chan texts from roughly the same period, each possessing unique features that were absorbed and/or superseded by the Chan mainstream of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[9] The lore of the Chan patriarchy was reworked in numerous iterations over the course of several centuries, such that most traces of the particular historical valuations and tensions from which it had originally emerged were erased or submerged. The historicity of the biographies and lineages of renowned Chan masters has been undermined not only by Dunhuang finds, but also by scholarly recognition that these biographical genealogies are by and large products of a period when Chan enjoyed the prestige of an established religious and cultural institution, and the privilege of canonizing a romanticized view of its origins.[10]

Examination of the Dunhuang cache and subsequent reexamination of earlier materials has given scholars a glimpse of lost sketches and a few of the cruder attempts, such as the *Lidai fabao ji*, that nevertheless contributed to the polished and confident style of Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279) Chan literature. The Dunhuang material in its diversity has also added to our knowledge of Tang dynasty (618-907) economics, administration, music, art, and of course other developments in Buddhism, and this too has contributed to reassessment of Chan. In the following chapters I will draw on just a few of the views that have emerged in the course of some eighty years of post-Dunhuang scholarship. In discussing the development of "modern" Chan history, one must also

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[9] I refer to the following Chan sectarian histories: the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (The Transmission of the Baolin [Temple]) of 801 (Yanagida Seizan, ed., 1975); the above mentioned *Beishan lu*; the *Caoqi dashi bie zhuan* 曹溪大師別傳 (Separate Biography of the Great Master at Caoqi) of 781 (ZZ. vol. 146: 483-488); and the Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經 (Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch), *ca*. late 8th century (S. 5475, Yampolsky, trans., 1967).

[10] For Yanagida Seizan's extensive work on this and related topics I refer the reader to Faure's 1994 bibliography in the *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, vol. 7. See also Faure 1988, 1989, and 1991; McRae 1986; Foulk 1987a.

bear in mind that Asian and Western notions of historiography have been far from static during these decades of exploration of the Dunhuang cache, but it is not within the scope of this study to delve into the vicissitudes of discourse "orientalist," "occidentalist," "sectarian," or "annalistic" with regard to Buddhist history.[11]

In any case, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' romanticized view of origins retains many traces of the historical tensions from which it emerged, traces which perhaps contributed to its relegation to "the deposit of sacred waste" at Dunhuang[12] and certainly contribute to its interest for scholars today. Herein assigned a role as representative of Chan's golden age that never was, the *Lidai fabao ji* displays a distinctly hybrid character. Themes and texts associated with disparate modes of Buddhist discourse are juxtaposed within the *Lidai fabao ji*, and I suggest that this in part reflects a broader social and religious transition.

The shift was signalled most dramatically by the 755 rebellion of the general An Lushan 安祿山 against the Tang ruling clans but is discernible even before this critical turning point. I will suggest that contradictions in the *Lidai fabao ji* mirror a fracture between pre- and post-rebellion modes of Buddhist (and secular) discourse regarding legitimacy, and by following the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' own teleological representations of spiritual legitimacy through the course of Chinese Buddhist history, I hope to elucidate some of the social and political fractures that affected Chan sectarian rivalries of the latter half of the eighth century.

During the century preceding the An Lushan rebellion, the Buddhist monastic establishments clustered in and around the two capitals had grown into a collective force to be reckoned with. The power of the Buddhist church was maintained through relations

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[11] For examples of studies that treat these issues with regard to Buddhism, see Faure 1993; Lopez, ed., 1995b.

[12] A phrase of Aurel Stein's, quoted in Faure 1988: 16n.19.

of sometimes strained interdependence with the imperial court, in a milieu of rivalry with court Daoism, and successive emperors struggled to co-opt and/or control its increasingly pervasive influence. The height of power of this kind of institutional, esoteric/scholastic Buddhism was reached under the above-mentioned Empress Wu Zetian (r. 684-705), who created an extensive network of monasteries promulgating Buddhist teachings in support of her reign and continually invited exemplary monks to court in order to pay her respects. After Empress Wu, the next ruler to have a significant impact on institutional Buddhism was Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756), whose reign effectively ended with the An Lushan rebellion. Even though the Tang forces subsequently rallied, the war-effort resulted in the strengthening of the peripheries at the expense of the center.[13]

Politically as well as culturally, the eighth century saw a great deal of oscillation between the time-honored and the experimental. In particular, the non-hereditary bureaucratic class fostered by the exam system began to make inroads into the labyrinth of privilege previously negotiated by the imperial household, Buddhist and/or Daoist monastic institutions, and aristocratic factions. More significantly, with the disintegration of periphery-center tribute relations, decrease in central control of the military, and greater freedom for inter-province commerce, the middle-level officials and military governors became increasingly independent administrators in the provinces. Before the end of the dynasty in 907 there were several attempts to reinforce imperial authority, but some provincial centers such as Chengdu, the birthplace of the *Lidai fabao ji*, became nearly autonomous. There was also a trend towards secularization of social values among the newly powerful and increasingly competitive bureaucratic class. These factors all contributed to create a milieu in which received genres and cultural paradigms were seen as inadequate or decadent.[14]

[13] For an excellent overview of institutional Buddhism in the Tang, see Weinstein 1987a.

[14] See Twitchett 1973 & 1979; Peterson 1973 & 1979; Dalby 1979; Hartman 1986.

The shifting of the balance of power from center to peripheries also weakened the influence of Buddhist centers near the capitals that were heavily implicated in Tang imperial politics. Decrease in resources for the older institutions of the central region, combined with new opportunities for patronage in the provinces, clearly had much to do with the development of the so-called "Southern School" of Chan to which the *Lidai fabao ji* claimed allegiance. However, the birth of the "Southern School" is attributed to a minor fracas that pre-dated An Lushan's rebellion by roughly two decades, namely the monk Shenhui's 神會 (684-758)[15] attacks beginning in 730 against the successors of the monk Shenxiu 神秀 (d. 706), who had been highly revered by Empress Wu and the entire Changan/Luoyang establishment.

According to a modern revised version of the origins of the Southern School, Shenhui was a radical reformer who advocated direct realization of the truth of one's own Buddha-nature and attacked the fallacies of the practice of Shenxiu's followers, who were said to have upheld a "gradual" or mediated teaching which fostered the delusion that awakening was a condition to be achieved, rather than inherent reality.[16] Implicated in Shenhui's doctrinal claims was the centuries-old struggle over Buddhist elitism, an elitism that engendered and was engendered by Imperial and popular enchantment with the mystique of the monk who gained numinous power through asceticism, ritual worship, and scriptural recitation.

Although Shenhui himself did not go so far as to disavow any form of Buddhist activity whatsoever, he and subsequent Chan masters became increasingly attentive to the contradiction involved in teaching and practicing (which are inherently gradualistic) according to the orthodoxy of the "sudden." This sudden/gradual doctrinal divide is key

[15] These dates are based on the recently discovered Longmen stele of 765. See Takeuchi 1985: 313-325.

[16] For further elucidation regarding these "modern orthodoxies", see Bernard Faure's article on the Northern Chan master Zhida 智達, revised version forthcoming.

for understanding the hybrid nature of the *Lidai fabao ji*. Although it has features usually associated with the so-called "gradual" or "Northern School" trends that flourished through court patronage in the eighth century, it is most heavily influenced by Shenhui's "Southern School" writings. Conspicuously, it is the only text to take Shenhui's doctrine to its logical extreme by advocating radically antinomian "formless" practice.[17] Thus, the exhumation of this work is somewhat like the discovery of a body in a mystery novel, in that it exposes some of the more awkward traces left by the radical erasures made in the name of eighth century "Southern School" orthodoxy.

As is often the case, doctrinal issues took distinct stylistic form. In "Southern School" Chan texts, sūtra commentary, discursive explanation, and eventually even the standard question-and-answer format all gave way to new genres. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries the quintessential Chan genre had become the *yulu* 語錄 (discourse record), collections of anecdotal "records" of interaction between a master and his disciples that were designed to convey a sense of everyday encounter as the true Buddhist teaching. The format clearly had antecedents in pre-Han classics such as the *Lunyu* and the *Zhuangzi*, but rather than simply reflecting the oft-cited "sinification of Buddhism," this can be associated with a vogue in intellectual classicism, a rejection of ornate commentarial prose in favor of a simpler style, as exemplified in Han Yu's 韓愈 (768-824) *guwen* 古文(old writing) movement. In Chan *yulu*, champions of the "sudden," -- which was increasingly identified with the quotidian immanent, as we shall see -- discovered affinities with and also contributed to create an intellectual milieu that favored skillful use of colloquial language and a deftly rendered personal immediacy.

The *yulu* were usually appended to the biographies of masters, and Chan hagiography developed, and was used, in ways distinctly different from earlier typologically arranged Buddhist biographical collections. In the eleventh century, biographies arranged as

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17 See Faure 1991: 63-65.

lineages, called *chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄 (lamp transmission record), became the standard means of advancing a particular school's claim to inheritance of perfect mind-to-mind transmission from master to disciple through the generations. In the *yulu* and *chuandeng lu* genres themselves we can thus recognize a tension between the absolutely unique encounter and the genealogy of perfect replication.

The *Lidai fabao ji* is prototypical of both Chan genres, being rather neatly divided into two parts; the first is in a format analogous to *chuandeng lu* and the second analogous to *yulu*. Through the *Lidai fabao ji* we may thus gain glimpses of an earlier stage of the hagiographical sensibilities that shaped Song dynasty Chan's distinctive literary styles and its images of exemplary practice, which were in turn the styles and images adopted by Japanese monks who founded the Zen schools of the Kamakura period. The early texts do not, however, help greatly to establish any firmer historical basis for the Chan masters who figured most prominently in the thirteenth century *gongan* 公案 (public case) genre, which currently enjoys widespread cultural recognition in its Japanese form, *kōan*. These short Chan anecdotes were culled from *yulu* and *chuandeng lu*, and were used as meditative aids to exemplify teaching points.

Due in part to a late twentieth century Western fascination with *kōan* literature, Chan writings are often presented, in both popular and scholarly works, as bare renderings of the spontaneous expression of realized self-presence. By approaching the *Lidai fabao ji* in its historical particularity, I do not wish to end at the other extreme and reduce it to an example of as-yet-unskilled Chan propaganda. I have no wish to imply that traces of mundane concerns necessarily invalidate the originality of insight or the purity of the motives of the unknown author or authors. To do so would merely replicate the ideological hypostasis of the tradition while attempting to unsettle it; by taking issue with the fabrications of the Chan histories one joins in the reification of a separate and

unwritten transmission of Chan.[18]

Instead, I would like to keep in play a consideration of the vexed nature of Buddhist transmission itself. The very time- and place-bound paradoxes of eighth century Chan that I have termed "a crisis in transmission" also exemplify a perennial Buddhist dilemma -- the dilemma of the necessary instability of the transmission of a specific yet unclosed canon of teachings (Dharma) by an ordained community (Saṅgha) that is predicated upon the ultimacy of the individual's experience of truth (Buddha/*bodhi*). At the heart of the "Triple Jewel" there must always already be a tension between continuity and insight.

The insoluble challenge that "Southern School" Chan presented to itself, that of how to teach and maintain a heritage within the orthodoxy of absolute immediacy, is but one form of this dilemma. As Weber has pointed out, such contradictions on the absolute level within a religious system in fact serve to perpetuate it, as the tradition sustains the challenge of generating meaningful solutions to the problem of itself. The essentially unresolvable nature of the foundational contradiction (how is it possible to mediate or teach im-mediacy) cannot be directly articulated but is expressed through secondary issues, and the system evolves through the channeling of creative energies toward both ideal and ideological ends, which are necessarily intimately related. In the following chapters I aspire to sustain the same tension that I examine, and hope that in this study of Buddhist transmission and succession in medieval China, neither realization nor realpolitik is reduced one to the terms of the other.

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[18] For a fuller discussion of this problem, see Faure 1991: 317-318.

## CHAPTER TWO: TRANSMISSION AND TRANSLATION

> There was no guarantee that, if bishops were once allowed to perpetuate themselves in the ancient manner, they might not also come to use the increasing communal power and wealth of the Church in the ancient manner, by treating it as their private property. The church was based, ideally, on the ethereal, non-physical continuities of teaching and baptism administered by the clergy. . . . By insisting that its leaders no longer beget children, the Catholic Church in the West made plain that it enjoyed a supernatural guarantee of continuity that no ancient city could claim. If they were to be respected as leaders of a "holy" institution, bishops and priests had to remain anomalous creatures. . . . They administered the palpable wealth of their churches as if they were men without possessions.
>
> -- Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*

A common set of themes recurs throughout this study. The monk's robe and the precepts represent continuity of some given "form" of the Buddhist teachings, and will serve as indices of the increasingly vexed nature of that formal continuity in eighth century Chan. Among the disputing voices, the Bao Tang school was certainly notable for its views on both robes and rules. Its followers were best known for their unique account of the fate of Bodhidarma's robe, and for their application of the statement that "the precepts are non-recollection" (*wuyi shi jie* 無憶是戒). According to the Bao Tang the monastic rules are formless and contentless, but this formlessness is clothed in the robe of lineage.

The themes associated with ordination, with transition from the mundane to a special status, involve an examination into the nature of the monk as an "anomalous creature" in terms of the mode of reproduction of his species (and *specie*). Within the ordained

community, the Saṅgha, what is the status of a gesture, such as ordination, that formalizes the continuity of the Dharma? How does such a gesture within the continuity of teachings-and-community function in relation to the status of the Buddha's enlightenment *qua* individual liberation -- Buddha/bodhi? It is essential to maintain a sense of the "context at work within the place," just as Brown sees "the ancient city" at work within the Catholic Church. One could say that these questions exist in "tangled hierarchy,"[19] for while realization as independent verification of absolute truth is integral to the self-definition of the Saṅgha community, so too is the formal, culturally contingent means of the teaching/community integral to the realization.[20] It is not so much that the Mahāyāna doctrine of Two Truths answers these questions, rather that it expresses the same tangle.

In Mahāyāna philosophy, realization of the absolute level of truth -- of non-duality and emptiness -- admits also a conventional level, the provisionally valid experience of temporal causality.[21] Yet the necessity of relying on conventional and consensual means to convey realized experience problematized the issue of continuity and transmission of the Buddhist teachings long before the Two Truths received formulation as an abstract principle. The historical Buddha as we know him taught for forty-five years but did not want to designate a successor as a conduit of his teachings: "After my decease, may each of you be your own island, your own refuge; have no other refuge."[22] In Buddhist tradition the "original teachings" are presented not as the Buddha's intentional bequest but as the result of the collective retentive efforts of the Buddha's immediate disciples -- and

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[19] Borrowed from systems analysis, this term refers to the circular causality between two hierarchic levels.

[20] For a now-classic discussion of this conundrum, see Katz 1978: 22-74.

[21] For basic information on the Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna distinction, see Kitagawa and Cummings, eds., 1989: 195-239. For a discussion of Indian, Chinese, and Western ideological constructs integral to the Mahāyāna distinction, see Silk 1994: 1-52.

[22] Lamotte, trans., [1958] 1988: 64; from *Dīghanikāya* II, p. 100.

the teachings as we now know them seem to be products of a process something like the multiplication of provisional islands of consensus.

In grappling with eighth-century Chan notions of mind-transmission and Dharma-inheritance, the idea of continuity itself is made strange.[23] Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha become ever more subject -- not to reinterpretation, which assumes an abiding referent that can be interpreted -- but to the contingencies of collective, and dispersive, imagination. Yet perhaps the fundamental imagination remains the Buddha's own, as represented in the injunction found in the earliest Buddhist texts that monks should wander alone in order to disseminate the Dharma as broadly as possible, and should gather together only provisionally during the rainy season.[24]

The collective and dispersive nature of Saṅgha is also illustrated in the oft-recurring Chan metaphor of the monk as a vessel of the Dharma, which evokes both a collective property and a dispensing, thirst-quenching property, and further, plays on the assumption that the contents of an effective vessel remain unaltered. The Buddhist monk's inheritance is thus paradoxical, a fixed fluidity and a solitary solidarity. In order to be enabled to live "as if they were men without possessions," it was necessary that the monk's self-possession be both unique and transferable. In what follows, the term "transmission" is meant to encompass this paradox: that which is unique about the status of the monk, and the means by which such uniqueness is replicated.

## Legendary Origins

The *Lidai fabao ji* could be called a history of origins, beginning with a legendary account of the introduction of Buddhism to China, and ending with the record of the Bao

[23] This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four, with reference to Bernard Faure's insights about early Chan and the Two Truths doctrine.

[24] Prebish 1975: 4-5.

Tang school founder, Wuzhu. In the course of discussing the ***problematik*** of transmission during the early centuries of Buddhism's flow into China, I will be taking up a number of passages from the *Lidai fabao ji*, but following a dynastic sequence results in a slightly different diachrony than that of the text.

As the title indicates, the *Lidai fabao ji* is meant to be a record "through (successive) ages/generations." In the presentation of the text, key successive moments in Chinese Buddhist history radiate inward like spokes of a wheel that converge upon the cardinal importance of Wuzhu and the core concerns of the Bao Tang school. Narrative choices, scriptural quotation as commentary, and occasional overt commentary all serve to repeatedly orient one back to Chengdu in the eighth century even as one is brought steadily forward from Emperor Ming's court in the first century. Following the chronology of the provenance of the author/s' source materials, when known, yields a different sequence. Yet another pattern emerges when one traces chronology through the lives of the monks highlighted in the *Lidai fabao ji*, which is the ostensible format of the text itself, mentioned above as characteristic of the Song dynasty *chuandeng lu* genre. Although dynastic periodization is not a structure native to the text, it is difficult not to be seduced by the convenience of such periodization, a "conventional truth" that readily allows itself to be superimposed upon by the other contingent patterns -- self-referential and teleological, bibliographical, genealogical -- described above. With this in mind, let me summarize the structure and sequencing of the text. Much of what I describe here will reappear in greater detail in due course.

The *Lidai fabao ji* comprises seventeen pages of the *Taishō* edition of the Buddhist canon, or approximately twenty-five thousand Chinese characters.[25] It begins with a list of thirty-seven titles that the author/s claim as sources. The narrative then opens with a version of the legend of the dream of Emperor Ming of the Han and his subsequent

[25] *T.* 51(2075) 179a-196b.

embassy to bring Buddhist scriptures and monks to China. This is followed by a description of a contest of magical powers between Buddhists and Daoists, a brief account of Śākyamuni Buddha, and a quotation from a work in the genre of Buddhist rebuttal to the third century Daoist *Hua Hu jing* 化胡經 (Scripture of Conversion of the Barbarians). A second version of the legend of Emperor Ming ensues. The narrative shifts to a quasi-historical anecdote involving the famous Jin dynasty monk, Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-417). Then, quotations from two well-known sūtras are followed by a quotation from a putative fifth century "translation" of a work (probably a Chinese compilation) chronicling the transmission from the Buddha up until the twenty-third generation in India and Kashmir. A passage from this work is altered and supplemented by the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s in order to bring the transmission up to the twenty-ninth generation, to "Bodhidharmatrāta," founder of the Chan lineage claimed by the Bao Tang school. The author/s then dispute a rival claim made in an early eighth century Chan text, the *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 (Record of the Masters and Disciples of the *Laṅkā[vatāra-sūtra]*) *T.* 85 (2837). This is followed by polemics over the origins of the *Laṅkā* transmission.

For all its diversity, the rather disjointed introductory section summarized above comprises a mere tenth of the text as a whole. The *Laṅkā* transmission discussion forms a segue for a more orderly but no less lively section, the biographies of the six successive Chan patriarchs: Bodhidharmatrāta 菩提達摩多羅 (d. *ca.* 530), more commonly known as Bodhidharma; Huike 慧可 (487-593); Sengcan 僧璨 (d. *ca.* 606); Daoxin 道信 (580-651); Hongren 弘忍 (602-674); and Huineng 慧能 (638-713). The text then jumps abruptly back to the fourth century with a passage on the monk Daoan 道安 (312-385), followed by a long series of quotations from Indian sūtras and from apocryphal Chinese scriptures. The biography of Huineng includes an account of the transmission of the robe and the Dharma from Hongren to Huineng, but immediately following the scriptural quotations the robe transmission episode is repeated in greater detail. Next follows the

robe transmission episode set in the court of Empress Wu Zetian, which leads to short biographies of Zhishen 智詵 (609-702) and his disciple Chuji 處寂 (669-736). The genealogical implications are complicated by the fact that although Zhishen is actually a disciple of Hongren, he receives Huineng's robe of transmission from the empress and passes it on to Chuji. The biography of Chuji's disciple, the Korean monk Wuxiang 無相 (684-762), is given in some detail, including quotations from his Dharma sermons. This is followed by passages purporting to record dialogues between the above-mentioned Southern School advocate Shenhui 神會 and various interlocutors. These passages are certainly based on extant works related to Shenhui, but the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s interpolate a spurious commentary on Sichuan Chan figures. The section on these various figures constitutes approximately another thirty percent of the whole.

The remaining sixty percent of the text is devoted to the Bao Tang founder Wuzhu 無住 (714-774). He is introduced giving a dramatic Dharma sermon. There follows an extended account of his early years and wanderings, his encounter with Wuxiang, the robe transmission from Wuxiang, and his ultimate recognition as the legitimate heir after Wuxiang's death. The rest of the text is taken up by sermons, dialogues with disciples and visitors on various topics, and it concludes with Wuzhu's death.

In a manner quite common to Tang dynasty historical and exegetical literature, at least a quarter of the *Lidai fabao ji* is composed of freely-altered quotations from a multiplicity of other works, some marked by direct reference and some not. Source materials from different times and places, changes in writing style, and strikingly innovative passages are all loosely held together by the author/s-compiler/s' arguments for the formless practice and transmission of Buddhism as a necessary corollary to the Southern School doctrine of no-thought. Although any single interpretation cannot do justice to the multiple concerns at work in the *Lidai fabao ji*, in these chapters I hope to convey a sense of the creative force as well as the ruthless sectarianism of this inventive

adaptation of Buddhist history. I appeal to the spirit of the text therefore, if not its letter, as I rip up and rearrange its passages in order to form yet another de/composite fabric. This is perhaps not as destructive as it sounds. I will proceed diachronically, as does the *Lidai fabao ji* itself, but certain passages that the author/s intended as editorial commentary I will deal with in their historical as well as their polemical contexts. For example, I will discuss Daoan before the Chan patriarchs rather than after, and the criticism of Jingjue will appear in the section on the Northern School in Chapter Four rather than in the discussion of Bodhidharma's transmission.

<u>Emperor Ming of the Han</u>

The introductory section of the *Lidai fabao ji* includes two versions of the legend of the introduction of Buddhism to China by the Emperor Ming 明 of the Han 漢 (r. 57-75), the second version following closely but not quite upon the heels of the first.

> The *Inner Commentary on the Dharma in the Han* [26] [says]: Emperor Ming of the Later Han in the third year of the Yongping era (60 A.D.) one night dreamt he saw a golden man sixteen feet high, with a nimbus about his neck and back, flying around the palace. The next morning, he asked his court officials, "What sort of auspicious sign is this?"
>
> The Grand Astrologer Fu Yi 傅毅 addressed the emperor, saying, "In the West there is a great Holy One called the Buddha. It was his image that you saw."
>
> Emperor Ming asked, "How do you know this?" The Grand Astrologer Fu Yi replied, "In the *Zhoushu yiji* it says; 'The Buddha was born in the *jiayin* year (958 B.C.) of the reign of King Zhao 昭, and passed into extinction in the *renshen* year (878 B.C.) of King Mu 穆. A thousand years after [his extinction] his teachings will spread to the Han (China).' Now that time has come."

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[26] *Hanfa nei zhuan* 漢法内傳, extant version titled *Hanfa bennei zhuan* 漢法本内傳, in the *Xu ji gujin fodao lun heng* 續集古今佛道論衡, *T.* 52 (2105) 397b25-401c25.

Emperor Ming despatched the Gentleman of the Interior Cai Yin 蔡愔 and the Erudite Qin Jing 秦景 and others as envoys to India. [There] they made requests, and for a Buddhist image they obtained the figure of a bodhisattva, for a scripture they obtained the *Scripture in Forty-two Sections*,[27] and for Dharma Masters they obtained two men, Kāśyapamātaṅga and Dharmaratna.[28]

[When they arrived,] Emperor Ming invited them to ascend to the audience hall. In order to make an offering, [the emperor] established the White Horse Monastery west of Luoyang 洛陽 city.[29]

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The *Mouzi* says: "Long ago, Emperor Xiaoming of the Han dreamt one night of a divine person, whose body had a sun-like radiance as he flew about before the palace. [The emperor] experienced an inner joy and his heart was deeply gladdened. The next day he told his ministers of this and asked them, 'What was this being?' A man of penetration, Fu Yi, said, 'I have heard that in India there was a man who attained the Way, called Buddha. He can effortlessly soar up in the air, and his body has a sun-like radiance, so it would probably have been this divinity.' Upon this, [the emperor] was edified."[30]

In the mythopoetic manner, the legend of Emperor Ming's dream explains the

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[27] The *Sishi'er zhang jing* 四十二章經, *T*. 17 (784) is traditionally held to be China's earliest translated sūtra, but it was probably compiled as an introduction to Buddhism sometime during the Eastern Jin (317-420), with the names of the two translators spuriously added. See translation by Robert Sharf in Lopez, ed., 1996: 360-371.

[28] Jiashemateng 迦葉摩騰 and Zhu Falan 竺法蘭, see *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks) biographies, *T*. 50 (2059) 322c15-323a23.

[29] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 179a14-24. The "White Horse Monastery" is Baima si 白馬寺, traditionally held to be China's first Buddhist monastery, but there is no clear-cut evidence supporting this claim. Luoyang is the old capital, in Henan.

[30] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 179c9-14. The source text is the *Mouzi lihuo lun* 牟子理惑論 (Mouzi's Treatise Settling Doubts), in the *Hongming ji* 弘明集, *T*. 52 (2102) 1a28-7a22. According to the preface, it was written by Master Mou, a prefect of Cang Wu 蒼梧 at the end of the 2nd century. However, there is no mention of it until the title appears in the *Fa lun* 法論, a collection of Buddhist literature compiled after 465. Thereafter, the work is frequently cited. For a more detailed discussion of the problems of its provenance see Zürcher 1959: 13-15, and the annotated French translation, Pelliot 1920: 255-435.

introduction of knowledge of Buddhism to China with reference to its prior introduction. In both sources, the minister Fu Yi instantly recognizes the figure in the dream as the Buddha. In the first, he specifies an obscure classic of antiquity as the source of his knowledge and "quotes" a passage which refers to the Buddha explicitly. In the second, Fu Yi is a *tongren* 通人, a man of penetrating or thorough knowledge, who has already heard of the Buddha. In both passages he plays the role of someone who knows of matters beyond the usual run of erudition. The minister has the key to the emperor's dream, but only the emperor has the power to actualize the prescience of that dream, by bringing Buddhism bodily into his realm.

Once the figure in his dream has been identified, the emperor immediately sends men to India to obtain images, monks, and scriptures. The emperor could have simply ordered an image fashioned according to his dream, but the "inner joy" he experienced inspires him to seek -- what? Its source, repetition, explanation? The images, monks and scripture represent all three, but the catalytic effect of the image of the Buddha appearing in an emperor's dream depends upon its complete unfamiliarity, its singularity. Personal experience of the Buddha is here prior to the reproduction of Saṅgha, represented by the monks, and Dharma, represented by copied scripture -- and yet it is not. The emperor has had an iconographically correct dream, but he does not have access to its power and is not a Buddhist until Indian monks arrive and he is enabled to "take refuge" through their mediation.

Between the two versions of the dream there is an important interim scene quoted from the same source as the first version, the *Hanfa nei zhuan* (Inner Commentary on the Dharma in the Han). A contingent of Daoists comes to the palace soon after the Indian monks arrive, and they insist that a contest of magical powers be staged in order to prove their superiority over the minions of the "barbarian divinity." The emperor agrees, and sets a date and place for the contest. The following scene opens at dawn outside of the

White Horse Monastery:

> Outside the gate of the monastery the Daoists set up three altars and opened twenty-four pickets.[31] Outside the gate of the monastery the emperor placed a relic [of the Buddha] as well as Buddhist scriptures and images, and he set up a pavilion adorned with the seven precious gems.[32] Chu Shanxin 褚善信,[33] Fei Shucai 費叔才 and the others placed Daoist scriptures, treatises and talismans on the altars. Then they set fire to them to verify their efficacy and, lamenting and wailing, they incanted: "A Barbarian divinity disturbs our China, we beg the Highest Celestial Venerables[34] to

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[31] In the *Taishang dongyuan shenzhou jing* 太上洞淵神呪経 *Daozang* 335: 18: 1a-13a, there is a description of a specific ritual involving three altars and twenty-four pickets, with deity names and geomantic prescriptions. The ritual was for the purpose of obtaining relief from calamities. For a discussion of the general background and significance of such rituals, see Schipper and Wang 1986. The most germane passage is as follows:

> The outer limit of the ritual area is a square called the Outer Altar. The real dimensions of the square may differ, but the symbolic numbers attached to it are always the same: twenty-four pickets, placed at the corners and at equal intervals along the sides, create a demarcation line with twenty-four interspaces. These represent the Twenty-four Energy Nodes; constructed around the equinoxes and solstices, these divided the tropical year of 360 days into twenty-four periods of fifteen days. This cycle is of paramount importance in the Taoist liturgical tradition, as it not only structures the religious year but also provides the fundamental grid for the organization of the community and the geographical network of dioceses. (*Ibid.*, p. 189)

It is also interesting to note that burning of the texts was the prescribed denouement of the ritual, rather than a sign of inefficacy: "It ends with the dispersion of the altar and the combustion of the Real Writs and all other writings (including the name tablets of the divine agents and the holy books recited during the service) in a great holocaust." *Ibid.*, p. 195.

[32] *Qibao* 七寳 Examples of adornment with various combinations of the "seven precious gems" are found throughout sūtra literature. Commonly the treasures are: *jin* 金 gold; *yin* 銀 silver; *liuli* 瑠璃 beryl; *boli* 玻璃 crystal; *chequ* 硨磲 nacre; *manao* 瑪瑙 carnelian; *zhenzhu* 真珠 pearl; and *meigui* 玫瑰 ruby. See Schaefer 1963: 222-249.

[33] The bulk of the extant version of the *Hanfa nei zhuan* is devoted to a series of debates between Chu Shanxin and the proponents of Buddhism, including Kāśyapamātaṅga and the emperor. He and Fei Shucai are otherwise unknown.

[34] Taishang tiancun 太上天尊. The *Taishang lingbao tiancun jing* 太上靈寳天尊経 is mentioned by name in the *Hanfa nei zhuan* ( *T.* 52 (2105) 400c7) description of the Daoists' altar preparations. According to this work, Taishang Tiancun is equivalent to Lingbao Tiancun, "The Sacred Jewel Celestial Venerables." This is a collective name for all the divinities of the Lingbao, a movement which transformed Daoism in the sixth century. The title Tiancun is an ancient one, often appended to the names of Daoist divinities.

> distinguish true from false for the sake of all beings." But the Daoist scriptures, treatises and talismans were burnt to ashes by the fire. The Daoists were greatly taken aback. Those who formerly ascended to Heaven now could not; those who formerly rendered themselves invisible now could not; those who formerly entered fire and water now dared not; those who formerly did protective spells and those who did invocations could not get any response. Of all their various abilities, not one could they substantiate. Chu Shanxin, Fei Shucai and the others took it to heart so much that they died.[35]

The superiority of Buddhism over Daoism is a recurrent theme in the *Lidai fabao ji*, and this concern is reflected in the lengthy quotations from the *Hanfa nei zhuan*. The *Hanfa nei zhuan* is a work stemming from the Buddhist-Daoist polemics of the third century. Due to its anti-Daoist thrust it was prohibited by the emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756), but the scriptural cataloguer Zhisheng 智昇 (658-740) re-edited it and succeeded in getting it into the canon as part of his *Xu ji gujin fodao lun heng* 續集古今佛道論衡 (Continued Anthology of Past and Present Buddhist-Daoist Debates).[36] Daoism was very powerful in Sichuan during the time of the Bao Tang school, and this was no doubt the reason that the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' chose to feature defeat of Daoists as a prominent part of their opening presentation.

Following the defeat of the Daoists, it is said that "the entire realm took refuge in Buddhism" and Emperor Ming allowed members of his household to be ordained. His permission legitimates an entirely new order of dependency, one which was outside the Han Legalist-Confucian conception of relationships in terms of responsibilities dictated by relative social and familial standing. It has been noted, however, that proper ordination would have been technically impossible within the terms of the legend, for the

[35] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 179b3-12.

[36] *T.* 52 (2105).

rules of Buddhist ordination require the presence of a minimum of ten monks, and the aspirant must also demonstrate knowledge of the full monastic code.[37]

It is only after this synecdochic conversion of China through the person of the emperor that the latter asks for further information. He asks not about the Buddha's teachings but about his birthplace, family, and dates, the three elements that constitute the core of a Chinese memorial biography. An unmistakable implication of the monk's replies is that the position of Emperor Ming of China is reduced to insignificance if compared to the cosmological scale of the Buddha's birthplace and genealogy. Kāśyapamātaṅga also quotes a Chinese apocryphal scripture to the effect that the seminal figures Laozi 老子 (d.u.) and Confucius 孔子 (551-479 B.C.E.) were actually disciples of the Buddha sent to China, and the Chinese classics were preliminary teachings meant to prepare the Chinese for the deeper insights of Buddhism.[38] In the realm of legend this may be acceptable, but once Buddhism had fully entered upon the stage of Chinese history, emperors tended to be less sanguine about this loss of status.

Transmission in the Fourth Century

It should not surprise us that the *Lidai fabao ji* account of the early period of Buddhism in China reflects the interests of its primary audience and milieu, Bao Tang followers in Sichuan at the end of the eighth century. The Daoist issue is a case in point,

[37] Chen 1964: 45.

[38] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 179b20-c9. The apocryphal scriptural source is the *Qingjing faxing jing* 清淨法行經. It is listed in the *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (Collection of Notes on the Translation of the Tripiṭaka) *T.* 55 (2145) 29a21; it was considered lost, but has been recently rediscovered in the manuscript cache of Nanatsu-dera in Nagoya, Japan; see Ochiai 1991: 26-29. In the *Lidai fabao ji* version Laozi is identified with Mahākāśyapa, and Confucius and his disciple Yanhui 顏回 are identified with the two Bodhisattva-youths Guanjing tongzi 光淨童子 and Mingyue rutong 明月儒童. The proliferation of such chimera was the Buddhist response to a third century Daoist work no longer extant in its original form, the *Hua Hu jing* 化胡經 (Scripture of Conversion of the Barbarians). This work claimed that Buddhism was a punitive creed imposed on foreigners by Laozi after he left China. See Zürcher 1959: 288-320; Kohn 1991.

but the most pressing problem for the Bao Tang was defending the legitimacy of the "Southern School" formless transmission, particularly the formless precepts. Following the trail of this dominant concern, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s skipped abruptly from Emperor Ming in the first century to the monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416) in the fourth century, and introduced Huiyuan's teacher Daoan 道安 (312-385) only much later in the narrative. However, before turning to fourth century monks who figure or are transfigured in the *Lidai fabao ji*, I would like to devote some discussion to the general topic of transmission of the formal aspects of Buddhist practice in China during the fourth century.

By "formal aspects" I mean particularly the Vinaya, or codes of Saṅgha discipline, and dhyāna, meditation technique. The attention Chinese Buddhists initially gave to the technical details of Indian systems of practice corresponds to a certain logic of moral praxis in Han Chinese tradition, wherein ritual observance centered on ancestral precedent was strongly linked to social mores. Notions of Saṅgha and Vinaya resonated with, and perhaps had projected upon them, the Confucian linkage between clan consciousness and a well-defined notion of rectitude.

Saṅgha and Vinaya were the living relics of the earliest known Buddhist life, which was re-consecrated in the fortnightly prātimokṣa recitation of rules and confession of transgressions.[39] However, the relationship between schemes of practice and individual realization was increasingly problematic within Mahāyāna. In the common Mahāyāna rubric, *śīla* (moral discipline) and samādhi (spiritual concentration) support, but do not cause, a-temporal and non-dual prajñā (wisdom). It is only these supports that can be replicated and transmitted -- until, precisely, we arrive at the "mind-to-mind transmission" theory of eighth century Chan.

At issue here is not simply a study of pre-Tang concepts of transmission, but *Chan*

[39] For a discussion of the evolution of this practice in India, see Prebish 1975.

transmission -- pertaining to something that cannot yet be said to be "Chan."[40] For the Chan school as such did not exist until the Tang, or as some would have it, the Song.[41] However, it seems fitting that in our search for the ancestors of Chan's singular transmission rhetoric, family resemblances may not always be apparent. Scholars have sifted the available records and clarified early traces of the figures and doctrinal issues that were later iconized in Chan traditional histories, but I wish now to try to see the pre-posterity of Chan submerged and barely distinguishable amidst the religious concerns of the various cultural and political micro-climates that succeeded one another in the early centuries of Buddhist activity in China.

Throughout the so-called "Six Dynasties" period (220-589), lay support (increasingly from all strata of society) for the construction of temples and images and for scripture-translation projects was linked to perception of the Buddhist monk as one who memorized scripture, practiced dhyāna, and who behaved according to a distinct code. It is difficult, however, to determine what that code might actually have been prior to the rash of Vinaya translations in the early fifth century. One might speculate that the prātimokṣa was orally transmitted by the first foreign monks active towards the end of the Han dynasty, but the earliest references to formal transmission of the precepts are in the *Gaoseng zhuan* biographies of Dharmakāla 曇柯迦羅 and Daoan 道安, and in *Chu sanzang ji ji* prefaces to precepts texts.[42]

Huijiao 慧皎, author of the *Gaoseng zhuan*, claims that before Dharmakāla (active

[40] Chan 禪 is the Chinese transliteration of dhyāna.

[41] For a discussion of the genesis of the concept of a "Chan school," see Foulk 1987 & forthcoming.

[42] On the possibility of oral transmission, see Zürcher 1959: 32. The *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks) *T.* 50 (2059) was compiled *ca.* 530 by Huijiao 慧皎. Dharmakāla's biography is on pp. 324c15-325a12; Daoan's is on pp. 351c3-354a17. Daoan's biography features not the complete Indian precepts, but monastic regulations that he developed for his community at Xiangyang, which will be discussed below in the section on Daoan. The *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (Collection of Notes on the Translation of the Tripiṭaka) *T.* 55 (2145) was compiled in 515 by Sengyou 僧祐.

*ca.* 249-254) translated and transmitted a prātimokṣa text there were no correctly ordained Chinese monks. Ordination consisted of simply taking the tonsure, and monks used Chinese ritual forms for the fortnightly ritual of confession. Dharmakāla was said to have decided that the entire Vinaya was too involved for his disciples, and to have introduced a text of the essentials of the *Mahāsāṅghika prātimokṣa.*[43] Dharmakāla's biography mentions a translation by Dharmasatya 曇諦 of a text for the ordination ceremony itself, but the extant texts with that title are actually later translations.[44]

The *Chu sanzang ji ji* includes fourth century prefaces to precepts texts, written by Dharmarakṣa 曇無蘭 and Daoan.[45] Hirakawa Akira points out that the existence of prefaces does not mean that the texts they refer to were complete, nor that they were comprehensible. He cites as examples the number of very poorly translated "ordination" texts among the early Dunhuang manuscripts, which would not have been reliable guides.[46] However, the oldest extant Chinese precepts text is a Dunhuang manuscript entitled *Shisong biqiu jieben* 十誦比丘戒本 (The Essential Sarvāstivāda Precepts for Monks), which Tsukamoto Zenryu surmises is a copy of a portion of Puṇyatara's 弗若多羅 incomplete initial translation of the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*. The verso colophon of the manuscript also attests that in the year 406 in Dunhuang, the precepts were administered to the monk Deyou 德祐, according to proper form.[47]

[43] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 324c28-325a4.

[44] *Ibid.*, 325a6-9. The work is the *Jie mo* 羯磨 (*Karmavācanā*), *T.* 22 (1433). The *Gaoseng zhuan* passage also mentions Saṅghavarman 康僧鎧, to whom Zhisheng 智昇 (658-740), in his *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Catalogue of Buddhist Teachings, [Compiled in] the Kaiyuan era), *T.* 55 (2154) 487a3, attributes a different translation of the same work, *T.* 22 (1432). On the dating of the extant texts, see Hirakawa 1955: 16.

[45] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145), preface by Dharmarakṣa at 80c20-81a25; preface by Daoan at 80a16-c19. Dharmarakṣa was active at the Eastern Jin capital at the end of the 4th century.

[46] Hirakawa 1960: 524.

[47] The Dunhuang manuscript is S. 797, corresponding to juan 27 and 28 of the complete translation, *T.* 23 (1435). See Kuo 1994: 45-46; Tsukamoto 1959: 189-190.

Whatever the actual state of the code, in popular imagination strictly observed precepts and mastery of a panoply of meditation techniques were intrinsic to the mystique of the numinously adept monk, one who was detached from the world and yet uniquely empowered to affect both the natural and the political spheres. This is a lastingly influential paradigm that persists in the biographies of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* [48] and beyond, one that was originally modeled on the role Western monks, such as Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (d. 348), were believed to have played during the violent upheavals in the north during the fourth and early fifth centuries. Fotudeng's *Gaoseng zhuan* biography presents his magical displays, his powers of prediction of the outcome of battles, and his unshakable calm in his dealings with his violent royal patrons as essential skillful means in his compassionate efforts to pacify and civilize the ruling clans and thus shield the Saṅgha and the populace at large from the worst effects of continual warfare.[49]

Dhyāna is often thus associated with the "barbarian" northern rulers' practical interest in magic and prognostication. Undoubtedly the character of northern Buddhism was greatly influenced by wide-spread faith in the miracles performed by monks and wide-spread perception of the contiguous "western regions" as a source of the uncanny. In contrast, it has been claimed, Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* reflects the more rational interests of the intellectually sophisticated Chinese dynasties of the south.[50] However, I find Koichi Shinohara very convincing when he argues that the medieval Chinese appetite for

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Most of the complete Vinaya translations were products of the early fifth century, as follows: 1) *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (*Sifen lu* 四分律) *T.* 22 (1428) trans. *ca.* 412 by Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍. 2) *Mahāsaṅghika-vinaya* (*Mohosengqi lu* 摩訶僧祇律) *T.* 22 (1425) trans. *ca.* 416-18 by Faxian 法顯 and Buddhabhadra 佛馱跋陀羅. 3) *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*Shisong lu* 十誦律) *T.* 23 (1435) trans. early 5th cent. by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什, Puṇyatara 弗若多羅 and Dharmaruci 曇摩流支. 4) *Mahīśāsaka Vinaya* (*Mishasebuhexi wufen lu* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律) *T.* 22 (1421) trans. *ca.* 438 by Buddhajīva 佛陀什.

[48] *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song Dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks) *T.* 50 (2061), completed in 988 by Zanning 贊寧.

[49] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 383b-387a, Wright, trans., [1948] 1990: 34-68.

[50] Wright [1954] 1990: 73-111.

accounts of supra-normal powers was not confined to the illiterate masses or to uneducated rulers in the north: "A rich tradition of miracle story collections existed by the time Huijiao produced his biography collection; indeed, interest in these stories was so great that a number of compilations of miracle stories were in circulation when Huijiao went to compile his collection of biographies."[51]

Chan monks themselves in the Song dynasty took care to distinguish Chan, and their putative founding ancestor Bodhidharma, from what they perceived as a narrow "specialist" quality in Six Dynasties dhyāna practitioners:

> *Dhyāna* (*ch'an-na* 禪那) is but one of the various practices: how could it alone be sufficient to become a holy man? Nevertheless, the people of that day took it that way. The historians also followed along, placing [Bodhidharma's] biography together with the [biographies of] other *dhyāna* practitioners, putting him in a class with those who tried to make themselves like lifeless wood and dead ashes. But the holy man does not restrict himself to *dhyāna* practice, nor does he avoid *dhyāna* practice.[52]

In order to establish a more concrete sense of what was understood as Six Dynasties dhyāna, it is helpful to review Tang Yongtong's taxonomy of early dhyāna practices.[53] There is a certain didactic or even soteriological hermeneutic at work in Tang's analysis, informed by the *śīla* -- samādhi -- prajñā rubric mentioned above. Tang weighs meditation, discipline, and asceticism on the "practice" side of a scale whose other side is "wisdom," or the theoretical aspect. Tang contends that during the period of North-South

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[51] Shinohara 1994: 482.

[52] Juefan Huihong 覺範慧洪 (1071-1128), *Shimen linjian lu* 石門林間錄; Foulk, trans., forthcoming: 153.

[53] First published in 1938, Tang's work on the introduction of Buddhism to China, the *Han Wei Liang Jin Nanbei chao Fojiaoshi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史, remains an invaluable resource. It has influenced among others Erik Zürcher, Kenneth Chen, and Stanley Weinstein, whose books on Six Dynasties and Tang Buddhist history are the standard English language sources.

division (317-589) the "wisdom" aspect flourished in the south and practice slowly atrophied, while in the north the reverse was true.[54]

Relying on translation attributions recorded in early Buddhist catalogues, Tang traces four currents in the transmission of dhyāna: 1) *Nian anpan* 念安般, a sobriquet for mindfulness technique derived from An Shigao's 安世高 Han translation, the *Anpan shouyi jing* 安般守意經.[55] This and related works represent early Buddhist contemplative exercises aimed at the cessation of mental activity in progressive stages. 2) *Bujing guan* 不淨觀(contemplating impurity), the classic Indian meditations on corpses and the impurity of the body, practiced as an antidote to attachment to form. 3) *Nianfo* 念佛 (recollection of the Buddha), first introduced through in the second century through a translation by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖 of the so-called *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*.[56] This sūtra advocates visualizing the Buddhas of the ten directions, and claims that one attains birth in a Buddha land through contemplation of the characteristics of the Buddha. It was a seminal work for both the Maitreya and Amitābha devotional cults, and will be discussed further in Chapter Three. 4) *Shoulengyan sanmei* 首楞嚴三昧, derived from the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-sūtra*, translated by Kumārajīva *ca*. 384-417.[57] This sūtra is said to comprehend all practices, and at the same time to represent a dhyāna attainable only by a bodhisattva of the highest level. The *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-sūtra* was also prized for its treatment of *abhijñā*, or supra-normal powers, even though in theory these are not the highest goal.[58]

Tang Yongtong's four types of dhyāna are presented in order of the chronology of the

[54] Tang [1938] 1991: 766.

[55] *Ānāpānasmṛti-sūtra* (Scripture of the Mindfulness of Breathing) *T*. 15 (602).

[56] *Banzhousanmei jing* 般舟三昧經 (*Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, *a.k.a. Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*), *T*. 13 (417) & (418).

[57] *T*. 15 (642).

[58] Tang [1938] 1991: 766-771.

major translations of the scriptures associated with them. The progression also resembles a *panjiao* 判教, or "classification of the teachings" teleology, in which the *śūraṅgamasamādhi* represents the most advanced type and level of meditation. Tang's hierarchization scheme is quite close to that found in some fifth century texts, in that the highest level represents an ideal balance of the "wisdom" and "practice" aspects, while the intermediate levels of dhyāna collectively represent the multiplicity of the practice aspect.

In catalogues of early translations, the first three types of dhyāna -- mindfulness, contemplation of impurity, and Buddha-visualizations -- are each represented in multiple texts devoted solely to that type or to a particular manifestation thereof, as well as being included in compendia that include all three and permutations thereof. Dhyāna techniques lent themselves to specialization and systematization, and apparently infinite proliferation. The so-called *Dhyāna-sūtra of Dharmatrāta*, to which we shall return shortly, employs variations on mindfulness and contemplation of impurity as organizational markers for what would otherwise seem to be endless lines of undifferentiated meditations on meditations in verse. In the *Dhyāna-sūtra of Dharmatrāta*, Buddha-visualization plays the same ultimate role as does the *śūraṅgamasamādhi* in Tang Yongtong's taxonomy, marking a qualitative shift from the particular to the panoptic, and not incidentally, from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna phraseology.

The *panjiao* imbedded in both the early fifth century translation and Tang's twentieth century analysis retains a two-tiered structure, while eighth century Chan would tend to promote a single "all inclusive practice" and eschew these elaborate systems incorporating gradated levels of practice. We may place the Tang dynasty apocryphal *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*[59] within this eighth century context. It is often cited in Chan works (including the *Lidai fabao ji*) as scriptural support for the notion of an all-inclusive

[59] *T.* 19 (945).

formless practice. Like other apocrypha, the *Sūraṅgama-sūtra* derived its pedigree as an authentic translation through being identified with works of the same or similar titles, such as variants of the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-sūtra*, that are listed in early Buddhist catalogues.[60]

However, the notion of an "ultimate" understanding of dhyāna was certainly not unknown in the Six Dynasties, for even if imperfectly deployed philosophically, the fourth century translations of *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures already provided a hermeneutic of non-duality that obviated dhyāna technique *per se* while at the same time affirming the functional multiplicity that such technical virtuosity represented. Consider, for example, these lines from the *Anpan shouyi jing* preface written by Xie Fu 謝敷, a fourth century proponent of *xuanxue* 玄學 or "abstruse learning": "One does not exit being to enter non-being. Unchanging tranquility is thus not 'exhausting conditions by taking refuge in the void'. . . . It is not that the outer is belied by purifying the inner, one does not depend on dhyāna to acheive wisdom. For this reason, what we call *avaivartika* (non-retrogression) does not mean following the progression of the four dhyānas."[61] We might read this in an evolutionary sense as a precursor of the sinification of Buddhism along neo-Daoist lines that Chan has sometimes been claimed to be. At the same time, we might also read it as a representation of an ongoing Two-Truths discourse *via* format: absolute preclusion of the conventional level takes place in the preface, while at the same time conventional supplements in practice are provided within the "sūtra" itself. Even cursory examination of such fourth century sūtra prefaces reveals that the tug of war between syncretic agglomeration and synoptic (or cryptic) reductionism did not necessarily begin (nor did it end) with the seventh and eighth century polarization between Tiantai systematization of practices and Chan or Jingtu 淨土 (Pure Land)

[60] Buswell 1989: 114-115.

[61] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 44a19-23.

identification with a single practice.[62]

In any event, one can safely say that the Six Dynasties was indeed a period of absorption of mutually antithetical and profusely redundant Indian practices and doctrines, but we need not assume even for the converted that Chinese reception of the new ideas was necessarily indiscriminate or dogmatic.[63] As I hope is demonstrated in the following discussion of Daoan's legacy, intellectual projects creating order out of chaos need not be lastingly defensible in order to be perennially appealing.

Daoan

The figures in the following sections will be examined with reference to the *Lidai fabao ji* version of early Chinese Buddhist history. The first and last of the four key figures I will discuss, Daoan and Huiyuan, appear in the *Lidai fabao ji*. The second figure, Buddhabhadra, is refracted by the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s into two fictitious characters; and the third, Kumārajīva, who was perhaps the single most influential monk of the fourth century, becomes interesting due to his absence.

Fotudeng's Chinese student Daoan 道安 (312-385) had, through his students, a great impact on the shape that Buddhism was to take in both the north and south in the fifth century.[64] He would enjoy a prominent place in any history of the formal aspects of Chinese Buddhism.

Fotudeng's death was closely followed in 349 by that of his patron, the Later Zhao 後趙 ruler Shi Hu 石虎. Escaping the disturbances ensuing from the breakdown of the Zhao court at Ye 鄴, Daoan and his fellow students were widely dispersed. Daoan

[62] For discussion of the concept of "one-practice samādhi" in this connection, see Faure 1986c.

[63] *Pace* Hurvitz [1962] 1980: 38 and Liebenthal 1948: 146 *sq*., respectively.

[64] Sources for the following discussion are: *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Daoan, *T*. 50 (2059) 351c3-354a17, Link, trans., 1958; Tang [1938] 1991: 187-228, 242-277; Zürcher 1959: 185-204; Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 655-756.

himself crisscrossed the central and northern regions for sixteen years, accumulating disciples along the way. He and his students finally retreated south to Xiangyang 襄陽 in 365, during the warfare that accompanied the Former Qin 前秦 reunification of central China.

In Xiangyang Daoan won the support of several wealthy donors, and in the writings concerning the monastery he established, Tanqi si 檀溪寺, we have the first documented traces of daily life at a large, flourishing monastery in China. Daoan, as head of a settled community of some several hundreds of monks, had to grapple with problems of organization and rules of conduct in the absence of any complete Vinaya translation. Faxian 法顯, similarly disturbed by Chinese monks' scanty knowledge of monastic rules, set out in 399 on his famous and harrowing fifteen year journey to India and back.[65] Daoan chose instead to do his best to make known his desire to obtain Vinaya texts. In the meantime he devised his own code based on what scriptural sources he could muster, a code which was said to have been widely adopted.

A glowing impression of his efforts is conveyed in a letter attributed to the contemporary literati Xi Zuochi 習鑿齒 (d. 390). This letter is reproduced in two early Buddhist works in sections devoted to Daoan, and may be suspected of having undergone partisan editing. Suspect or not, it is still a testimony to the kind of Buddhism for which Daoan was remembered:

> He is no ordinary Gentleman of the Tao! Teachers and disciples number several hundred; indefatigable in fasting and in elucidating, they do not have the arts and crafts of metamorphosis and transformations with which they can befool the ears and eyes of the common folk; neither do they have any awe-inspiring gravity and great power with which they can keep in line irregularities of egregious petty folk. And yet, nevertheless,

[65] *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳 (Biography of the Eminent Monk Faxian), a.k.a. *Foguo ji* 佛國記 (Record of Buddhist Kingdoms), *T.* 51 (2085); Giles, trans., 1923.

teachers and disciples, decent, decorous, themselves are mutually respectful and reverential towards each other. That so many could be calm and composed, sober and steady: this has really never been seen by me before.[66]

A description of the code responsible for such impressive results is given in the *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Daoan -- which is the source for the truncated version of this code given in the *Lidai fabao ji*. It is not immediately apparent what function Daoan serves in the *Lidai fabao ji* narrative, for the section that opens with him is an odd anachronism in the midst of an otherwise genealogical account of the transmission of Bodhidharma's robe. The *Lidai fabao ji* has this to say about Daoan:

In the three hundred years after the Buddhist teachings came east, there was no formal standard at all. [However] around the time of Shi Le of the Jin, Fotudeng's disciple Dharma Master Daoan was at Xiangyang.[67] Fujian of the Qin heard of Daoan's fame from afar, and so he despatched a retainer to attack Xiangyang and capture Dharma Master Daoan. The Qin emperor welcomed him with great respect. The sons of the nobility of Changan all depended on his training to chant their verses. Thus there is this saying, "If you don't rely on Dharma Master Daoan, you cannot hit the center of difficult meanings."[68] His sagacity and eloquence were surpassingly keen. He established a method of organization for discourses and he wrote rules for monks and nuns, a set of statutes for the Buddha-Dharma, and rules for taking the precepts. He classified them into three sets: the first concerns perambulating with incense and deciding the seating; the second concerns the daily six periods of repetition of the *vandana*; and the

[66] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 352c; Link, trans., 1958: 25.

[67] Shi Le 石勒 was first ruler of the Later Zhao, and died some thirty years before Daoan came to Xiangyang.

[68] *Bu yi Daoan fashi yi bu zhong nan* 不依道安法師義不中難. *T.* 51 (2075) 182c21. This loses the rhyme and rhythm of the *Gaoseng zhuan* original: *Xue bu shi An yi bu zhong nan* 學不師安義不中難. *T.* 50 (2059) 353a15-16. Link credits Lyman Van Slyke for this translation of the latter: "If students be not pupils of An, difficult meanings will vex them anon." See Link 1958: 31.

> third concerns the monthly *uposatha* confession of transgressions. The formal postures, the invocation of blessings used in services, *et cetera*, originated then with Master Daoan.[69]

Though this section opens with standard praises of Daoan, it soon becomes clear that he is to serve as an exemplar of delusion. After tacitly including a Sichuanese contemporary and his ritual text in the same denunciation, the *Lidai fabao ji* launches into a long series of quotations from the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and other works in order to criticize attachment to the "form"of practice.[70] Under this hermeneutic, codes of behavior and lists of dhyāna techniques become interchangeable, for any attention to formal particularity is considered equally futile, and even damning: "The *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* says. . . . 'If you depend on a little of the Dharma, there will arise a little Dharma. If you depend on forms, then the Dharma at once goes bad.' Again, 'If you follow after words to catch meanings you build up various teachings, and because of that build-up, when you die you will fall into Hell.'"[71]

The *Lidai fabao ji* holds up for scorn lists of dhyāna techniques that are reminiscent of Daoan's enumerations in his commentaries to dhyāna sūtras: "The various Hīnayāna dhyāna and the various samādhi teachings are not the tenets of Bodhidharma's school, and [examples] are enumerated as follows: contemplation of white bones, of counting breaths, of the nine visualizations, of the five cessations, of the sun, of the moon, of a

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[69] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 182c17-25. This is obviously derived from the *Gaoseng zhuan* biography or some other source based upon it, but here the section on monastic regulations is rather garbled. For the passage on regulations, see *T.* 50 (2059) 353b23-27, Link, trans., 1958: 35-36.

[70] In this and other *Lidai fabao ji* sections criticizing attachment to form, three related terms are used: 1) *shixiang* 事相, phenomenal or ritual aspects as opposed to the noumenal or doctrinal; 2) *shi* 事 by itself, used more for the ritual aspect, and 3) *xiang* 相 by itself, usually meaning characteristics ("marks") or features, externals, the contingent as opposed to the absolute.

[71] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 182c28-183a1.

storied tower, of a pond, of the Buddhas."[72]

Although passages in the scriptures denouncing attachment to form, characteristics, and even dhyāna are quoted in abundance, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s apparently did not find it so easy to find explicitly antinomian scriptural precedents. The author/s do quote passages that advocate the "all-inclusive" bodhisattva precepts over specific "conventional" precepts, but it seems the greater import of this passage is to establish support for the repudiation of formalism *per se*, and thus create a space for the introduction of the formless precepts.

Yet even for Daoan, formal precision must be understood as fundamentally non-dual, for in spite of the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' selective editing of his biography, he is no mere school-master in Buddhist garb. He writes in a commentary: "Therefore, in observing the precepts there is neither precept nor transgression, in practicing mental concentration there is neither concentration nor disturbance, and in dwelling in wisdom there is neither wisdom nor ignorance."[73] On the other hand, the active *upāya* (skillful means) aspect of the non-dual can be seen in the assertion in a letter from Daoan in Xiangyang to an unknown colleague in Liangzhou 梁州 (Gansu) who was apparently helping him to obtain texts. Stating the urgent need for a complete Vinaya, Daoan writes: "The great work of conversion will be deficient so long as the rules for the four groups of the community (monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees) are incomplete. The *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures depend on 'good sons and daughters' as the main teachings. Thus, initiating the fundamental 'hundred practices' of conduct set forth in the precepts is like a tree taking root."[74] Here, in "tangled hierarchy," observance of the rules is

[72] *Ibid*. 183a11-13.

[73] *He Fangguang-Guangzan luejie xu* 合放光光讚略解序 (Preface to a summary of the collated *Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā-sūtra*), in *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T*. 55 (2145) 48a29-b1, Zürcher, trans., 1959: 193, with minor modifications.

[74] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T*. 55 (2145) 62c18-20. The letter is not attributed, but Zürcher argues that it

fundamentally non-dual while at the same time the Dharma is grounded in monastic rule -- which Daoan envisions as having achieved closure and sufficiency in some form not yet available in China. There was as yet no consciousness of the embarrassment of riches constituted by the voluminous sectarian variations of the Vinaya.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, which Daoan devoted his life to studying, repeatedly deploy this soteriological dialectic between the evocation of functional particularity/multiplicity and the assertion that multiplicity is actually empty and non-dual. Daoan's understanding does retain the perspective of his *Daode jing* studies in that he tends to see multiplicity ***grounded in*** the absolute. Until Kumārajīva's dissemination of Mādhyamika notions such as the identity of saṁsāra (the cycle of phenomenal existence) and nirvāṇa (non-dual absolute realization/reality), this affirmation of multiplicity only as that which is resolved into the absolute tended to prevail among Chinese Buddhist exegetes.[75] A similar "*prajñāpāramitā* resolution" can also be discerned in use as a hermeneutical device for specifying and then reconciling dhyāna techniques, as for example in the oscillations of the *Anpan shouyi jing*.

In any case, let us now consider Daoan's legacy in terms of a different yet related issue of transmission. As alluded to in the *Lidai fabao ji* passage above, Daoan spent the latter part of his life as a valued advisor in the court of the Former Qin ruler Fujian 苻堅 (r. 351-385). Fujian may have had other strategically compelling reasons to advance on Xiangyang besides obtaining the services of Daoan, but this particular move in his campaign to overcome the Eastern Jin 東晉 had important consequences in the history of Buddhism. The dispersion of the Xiangyang community spawned several lastingly vital communities, including Huiyuan's at Mt. Lu in the south, to which we will have occasion to return.

must be from Daoan. Zürcher 1959: 392 n. 81.

[75] Zürcher 1959: 192.

Fujian's troops took Daoan back north to the Qin court at Changan 長安 in 379, and thus he began a new stage of his career at the age of sixty-seven. The Buddhist sources are eloquent in their descriptions of Daoan's prestige and influence, and the independent account in the *Jin shu* 晉書 (Jin History) also attests to Fujian's esteem of Daoan.[76] One can only surmise about the contrast between life as the abbot of a monastery located on a former private estate and life as a prominent figure at a court whose ruler was engaged in an attempt to reunify the Han empire. Although the Qin was to fragment in 385, the year of Daoan's death, the translation atelier that Daoan established in Changan survived to become the nucleus of Kumārajīva's activities.

In connection with these translation efforts at Changan, Daoan became the first Chinese monk known to have attempted a systematic discussion of the problems involved in translating scripture into Chinese. His discussion of the "five deviations from the original and three difficulties" (*wu shi ben san bu yi* 五失本三不易) form part of his preface to a new *Prajñāpāramitā* translation, written in 382. While Daoan's "five deviations" seem matter-of-fact and technical, his "three difficulties" bear down upon a soteriological problem, the implications of translation for transmission of the Dharma:

> The holy ones must be in accord with the times, and the customs of the times change. However, cutting away the polish from the ancient language in order to suit the present period, this is the first difficulty. Heaven sets apart ignorance and wisdom, the holy one cannot act as a stairway. Thus, wishing to take subtle words from the eminence of a thousand years, and convey them in terms of latter-day customs devolved from the age of the hundred generations of kings, this is the second difficulty. Ānanda brought forth the scriptures when the Buddha had not been long gone; and then the honored Mahākāśyapa had the five hundred arhats with supra-normal powers by turns consider [Ānanda's words] carefully and write them down. This

[76] *Jin shu* 114.3b–4a, Rogers, trans., 1968: 160-161.

was a thousand years ago, and yet we rely on recent ideas to take their measure. Those arhats were so very cautious, and these men of saṁsāra are so very complacent -- isn't this just the presumption of those who are ignorant of the Dharma? This is the third difficulty.[77]

Daoan suggests that supra-normal powers are necessary for anyone who would be an editor of the Dharma. The task as it is presented here is not one of simple transcription but requires personal verification deriving from affinity with the Buddha, such that latter-day "men of saṁsāra" cannot hope to approach the original arhats. Given this sensibility, one might see Daoan's translation concerns and his concern with dhyāna and the precepts as of one piece. The exacting particularity of practices that cannot be reconciled with present custom serve as signs that the holy ones have not lowered themselves, become stairways, and distorted the Dharma.

One may also see here a reflection of Daoan's early study and subsequent rejection of *geyi* 格義, the practice of matching Buddhist concepts with terms from Chinese currents of mystical philosophy.[78] In this light as well can be seen his innovation regarding Buddhist names -- all Chinese monks were thenceforth to take the Buddha's clan name, Śākya (Shi 釋), as their own.[79] Daoan thus consistently argues not for adaptation, but rather for the (re-) creation of difference, for adherence to a particular Buddhist law as the only means to actually transmit the Buddhist letter.

Yet it is an important aspect of his legend of uncanny erudition that he was known for his mastery in Chinese classics and antiquities, and the standards of scholarship that he applied to cataloguing Buddhist texts were derived from secular bibliographic

[77] *Chu sanzang ji ji* *T*. 55 (2145) 52c3-9.

[78] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Sengguang, *T*. 50 (2059) 355a; Link, trans., 1958: 43.

[79] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Daoan, *T*. 50 (2059) 353a; Link, trans., 1958: 29.

methods.[80] The distinction that he articulated and instituted for the Buddhist clergy was founded upon notions of mastery very similar to those of the Han elite -- mastery of the body through detailed codes of behavior and ritual dress, and mastery of a sanctioned corpus of texts. This similarity in principle, and Daoan's exacting attention to formal difference, proved a highly effective combination.

The traditions concerning Daoan raise two very important questions for fourth and fifth century Buddhists in China: how does a "translated" Buddhism work? -- and, in an undertone -- does it work? A variety of claims were made in these and subsequent centuries as to the locus of a guarantee or verification that what was being disseminated was in fact the true Dharma, and a variety of fall-back positions were argued. One may see a kind of resonance-and-response between appeals to correct form and appeals to the ineffable in Chinese Buddhist biographies. The sources of legitimacy evoked were on the one hand institutional, hermeneutical, and ritual standards; and on the other hand the final testimony tended to be spiritual signs, subtle or otherwise. These formal and ineffable standards were dependent upon each other, signs and criteria that each referred to the other. Formal exactitude was the external mark of the mysterious, but spiritual effects were also external manifestations demonstrating that form had been rightly internalized. Consider, for example, the story of Daoan's dream:

> An (Daoan) frequently annotated the sūtras, but he feared that [his interpretations] did not harmonize with the principles [of the sacred texts], so he then pronounced the following vow (*praṇidhāna*), "If what I have explained is not very far from the principles, may I behold an auspicious sign!" He then dreamed that he saw an Indian man of the Way who had white hair and long eyebrows, and who spoke to An, saying, "The annotations made to the sūtras by you, Sir, are quite in harmony with the principles [of

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[80] On Daoan and antiquities, see *ibid.*; Link, trans., pp. 29-31. On bibliographic methods, see Zürcher 1959: 195.

> the sacred texts]. As for me, I have not yet attained nirvāṇa and I live in the Western Regions. I will aid you in diffusing [the doctrine]. From time to time you may make me an offering of food." Afterwards when the *Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya* arrived, the Reverend Yuan (Huiyuan) then recognized that he about whom the *Upādhyāya* (i.e. Daoan) had dreamed was the [arhat] Piṇḍola. Thence they established a seat to make food offerings to him, and everywhere this became the rule.[81]

Here Daoan's concern about his exegesis is allayed by a scripturally verifiable dream which in turn modifies monastic ritual. Nor is this the only instance in Daoan's biography of spiritual validation conveyed by Piṇḍola. Although the arhat whom the Buddha criticized for shameful display of *abhijñā* and gluttony and who was to become the patron saint of the refectory and the monastery bathroom may seem an odd associate for the fourth century's paradigmatic exegete, their qualities complement each other effectively. Daoan, through his student Huiyuan, had the influence to institute monastic food offerings for the wanderer, and the antic figure Piṇḍola continued to serve as guarantor and guide for earnest monks.[82] Piṇḍola is also an intermediary for the future Buddha Maitreya, who was considered an advisor for exegetes and meditators and to whom Daoan and his disciples regularly repeated their vows to be reborn in Tuṣita heaven where Maitreya resided. Though not identified by name, Piṇḍola pays a visit before Daoan's death that is at once a sign of grace and an instruction in the procedure for a monk's last (and fortnightly) rites.[83]

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[81] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Daoan, *T.* 50 (2059) 353b; Link, trans., 1958: 34-35, with minor modifications.

[82] For sources on Piṇḍola, see *T.* 32 (1689) 784b-c; *T.* 49 (2030) 13a; Levi and Chavannes 1916; and Strong 1979. Bernard Faure attests to the continuity of his role in medieval and modern Japanese monastic practice: "Another well-known testimony to ritual correctness is the Arhat Piṇḍola, whose acceptance of the ritual offerings in the monastery's kitchen and bathroom serves to overcome the doubts of the monks as to their spiritual progress." Faure 1991: 279.

[83] Monastic schedule usually calls for ritual bath and shaving every two weeks. The association between bathing and *memento mori* can still be seen in the inscriptions of East Asian monastery bath-

Frequently An with his disciples Fayu and others pronounced vows in front of Maitreya expressing their vow to be born in Tuṣita. Later in the twenty-first year of Jianyuan of the Qin, on the twenty-seventh day of the first month (Feb. 22, 385), suddenly there was a strange monk whose appearance was very common and unprepossessing who came to the monastery to ask for temporary lodging. Since the monastery quarters were confined they put him in the hall of exposition. At the time the *Karmadāna* (preceptor) was on watch in the hall, and at night he saw this monk go out and come in through the space between the window slit. He hastily informed An. An, amazed, arose, paid salutation, and inquired the purpose of his arrival. The strange monk replied, "I have come for your sake!" "I myself," An said, "regard my sins as grievous. How can I be brought over to liberation?" [The monk] replied, "But you can very well be brought over! Yet, for the nonce, bathe the Holy Monk and your expressed desire will inevitably bear fruit!" And he showed him in detail the method of bathing. When An inquired politely where he would go in his coming life, the monk then with his hand seemed to push aside the heaven to the northwest. Immediately they saw the clouds part and beheld perfectly the wonderful surpassing rewards of Tuṣita. That same evening a great multitude -- several tens of people -- all saw together the same sight. When afterwards An prepared the utensils of the bath he saw that there was a band of several tens of unusual little boys who came to the monastery and played about. After a while they came to the bath. Actually this was a holy response.[84]

Buddhabhadra

Daoan became himself a kind of patron saint of the formal, and in him was vested not only the responsibility for a number of specific monastic regulations but also the authority to vouch for the possibility that, given both the requisite powers and the

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[84] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Daoan, *T.* 50 (2059) 353c; Link, trans., 1958: 36-37, with minor modifications.

necessary humility, true principles *could* be transmuted and transmitted. Spiritual signs that one had "got it right" were highly valued but always subject to the danger of over-production. There had to be signs of/for temporal and causal conditions of transmission that worked in tandem with signs of the transcendent, and in this, I suggest, we find a germ of the notion of spiritual genealogy. Daoan, as in other spheres, set a mundane precedent that at the same time has deeper implications: "From the Han and the Wei up to the Jin, there had been a gradual increase in the arrival of the scriptures, yet the names of the men who transmitted the sūtras were not stated. . . . An then collected and brought together the names and the titles and indicated the times and the men."[85]

In the fifth century we begin to see examples of lists of names included with Vinaya and dhyāna-related texts as records of transmission. While there are Indian stories of the early generations of transmission from the Buddha included in the two extant Aśoka texts and in certain Vinaya, there are also lists appended to Chinese translations of Vinaya and meditation texts that were concerned with more recent history, and constitute claims for authority based on the translators' pedigrees.[86] As John McRae says: "The motive for the Chinese Vinaya lists was clearly to maintain authenticity of textual reproduction within a tradition that was originally oral, not written. . . . These lineages . . . were probably recorded not for their general interest, but because they defined the religious heritage of

[85] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Daoan, *T.* 50 (2059) 352a27-29; Link, trans., 1958: 18, with minor modifications.

[86] There are divergent traditions regarding the succession of authority after the Buddha's death. See Lamotte [1958] 1988: 202-212. The Aśoka texts include an account of the transmission of five Dharma masters, from Mahākāśapa to Upagupta. There are two variant Chinese translations of the legend of Aśoka, the Mauryan king who reigned in the mid-3rd century B.C.E. The first is the *Ayu wang zhuan* 阿育王傳 (*Aśokavadāna*, *Biography of King Aśoka*), *T.* 50 (2042), translated by An Faqin 安法欽 in the early 4th century. The second is the *Ayu wang jing* 阿育王經 (*Aśokarājasūtra*, *Sūtra of King Aśoka*), *T.* 50 (2043), translated by Saṅghapāla 僧伽婆羅 in 512. See Strong 1989, and Li 1993. For a genealogy of Vinaya masters stemming from the Buddha's disciple Upali, see the *Mahāsaṃghika-vinaya* (*Moho sengqi lu* 摩訶僧祇律) *T.* 22 (1425) 492c-493a, translated ca. 416-18 by Faxian and Buddhabhadra; and Buddhaghosa's *Samantapāsādikā* (*Shanjian lu piposha* 善見律毘婆沙) *T.* 24 (1462) 684b-685a, translated ca. 488 by Saṅghabhadra.

the translators of the texts in question."[87]

For dhyāna transmission, the earliest lineages found in a Chinese work, the *Chu sanzang ji ji*, are associated with the Kashmiri Sarvāstivāda tradition of the master Dharmatrāta. The *Chu sanzang ji ji* includes four variant lineages beginning with either Mahākāśyapa or Ānanda, and ending with Dharmatrāta and his disciples. Two of these *Chu sanzang ji ji* lists appear in prefaces to the so-called *Damoduoluo chan jing* 達摩多羅禪經 (*The Dhyāna-Scripture of Dharmatrāta* ) translated by Buddhabhadra.[88] These prefaces are by Daoan's student Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416), and Buddhabhadra's student Huiguan 慧觀 (d. *ca.* 440). The *Damoduoluo chan jing* itself includes Buddhabhadra's preface with a different version of his lineage.[89]

Buddhabhadra 佛馱跋陀羅 (359-429) presented and commented on the *Damoduoluo chan jing* while staying at Huiyuan's monastery on Mt. Lu in south China, after having left Changan with his close disciples, including Huiguan, under unfavorable circumstances.[90] The prefaces by Huiyuan and Huiguan afford fascinating glimpses of lineage transmission in the early fifth century. They are also apologia for Dharma transmission, and McRae notes that their conceptual similarity suggests that they both originated from notes made from Buddhabhadra's lectures *in situ*, even though the actual lists of names included in the text itself and in the two prefaces all differ from each

[87] McRae 1986: 79.

[88] Demiéville says that the *Damoduoluo chan jing*, *T.* 15 (618), was mis-named (in the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 *T.* 49 (2034) 71a); for in the text itself it is identified as a manual of practice, or *Yogācārabhūmi* (see *T.* 15 (618) 301b22), rather than a *Dhyāna sūtra*. He further says that it is the work of Dharmatrāta's disciple Buddhabhadra's master Buddhasena. See Demiéville 1978: 46. Buddhabadra's own preface makes no mention of Buddhasena, but the *Gaoseng zhuan* does say that Buddhabhadra studied with him when young (*T.* 50 (2059) 334c18).

[89] See McRae 1986: 79-82. In the *Chu sanzang ji ji*, two lists are found in Sengyou's record of Sarvāstivāda masters, *T.* 55 (2145) 88c-90a; two are found in Huiyuan's and Huiguan's respective prefaces, *ibid.* pp. 65c-66a and 66c-67a. Buddhabhadra's list in the translation of the *Damoduoluo chan jing* is at *T.* 15 (618) 301c; and Huiyuan's preface is also included, with the list at *ibid.* pp. 301a-b. I will discuss these further in the next chapter in connection with the *Lidai fabao ji*'s list of patriarchs.

[90] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Buddhabhadra, *T.* 50 (2059) 334b-335c.

other.[91] In any case, the prefaces' common claim that spiritual genealogy goes beyond mere serial oral reduplication of the teachings was to influence the subsequent development of transmission theory. The preface by Huiyuan reveals a certain reification and mystification of transmission itself, and also reveals some contradictions that emerge with such reification.

> The principle is obscured by repeated broadcasting and the Way is darkened in letters. Thus it was that Ānanda inherited the Buddha's oral message in all its particulars. If it happens that there is no such person [to receive it] one must conceal the mysterious storehouse. How is it that the mind is an unchanging compass when its transformations go in all directions? Mere repetition does not determine likeness, one must wait for evocation before responding. . . . The Tathāgata had not long entered nirvāṇa when Ānanda transmitted [the Dharma] to his fellow disciple Madhyāntika. Madhyāntika transmitted it to Śāṇvāsa. These three responses entirely delivered what was wanted, and profoundly tallied with the ancient original. This achievement lies outside of words and is not delineated in the scriptures.[92]

Huiyuan then goes on to recount a traditional version of the decline of the Dharma, namely, that Upagupta was not quite up to the level of the Buddha's immediate disciples and Upagupta's disciples preserved only the essentials. After the five-part division into the different schools of Vinaya, the true transmission in a sense goes underground, functioning to save ordinary beings like "hidden footsteps leaving no trace." However, the vulnerability of the "ancient scriptures" to external vicissitude gives rise to fears for the continuance of the teachings, and so select representatives from each school transmit

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[91] See McRae 1986: 299 n. 199 & 201. On the basis of the greater sophistication of the transmission scheme found in the later of the two Aśoka translations, and the Kashmiri lineages discussed below, McRae speculates that a theory of transmission may have been evolving in Kashmir during the 4th and 5th centuries.

[92] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 65c5-12.

meditation scriptures to reinforce the Dharma. Huiyuan argues that diversity is a mark of the fullness of the Dharma not its degeneration, and those who convey the endless variations of its skillful means are not known in worldly terms. They are not defined by sectarian divisions, but neither do they put forth anything that is outside the Dharma manifested within those sectarian divisions.[93]

Throughout this passage, Dharma transmission is not a named subject, and is only intermittently identified with specific vessels. "It" is a changing verb, and perhaps for Huiyuan is ultimately that which resolves into itself all contradiction between esoteric transmission and its *raison d'être*, exoteric dissemination; between skillful means and the Buddha's original teachings; and between multiple Vinaya and meditation traditions and the ultimate non-sectarian closure of the Dharma. The resolution is necessarily unstable, for the intimate discord between the transmission, interpretation, and individual experience of truth is held in suspension within one friable vessel. This suspension withholds each unreconciled complementary term -- esoteric/exoteric, original/skillful, multiple/ultimate -- in the interminable delay of imminent disbelief or dissolution.

In contrast to Daoan's exhortation that one must face one's inadequacies and yet muster all the powers available in order not to lower Dharma standards through accommodation to the times, in Huiyuan's preface Dharma and adaptation are coterminous. Yet Huiyuan and Daoan agree that something was lost in the transmission after the first generations. Moreover, even though Huiyuan declares that the Way is "darkened in letters" and the original transmission is not contained in the scriptures, the Dharma is said to be in serious danger if the ancient scriptures are lost. Huiyuan is caught in (and perhaps enjoys thus capturing) a paradox that was to become ever more familiar in Chan writings after Shenhui. This is the paradox of orthodox transmission outside the scriptures, of the Dharma as an ineffable power that is all-encompassing and

[93] *Ibid.*, *T.* 55 (2145) 65c12-28.

endlessly adaptable and yet must be endlessly guarded from threats external to itself. Daoan, on the other hand, had written of transmission simply as a sacred trust, empowering yet only as effective as its human trustees.

Although the sections on Daoan and Huiyuan are not linked in the *Lidai fabao ji*, the author/s obliquely trace a similar fissure between Daoan's religious sensibilities and those of his disciple Huiyuan, for they ingeniously contrive to introduce the im-mediate teachings of Bodhidharma to Mt. Lu in a wild scramble of identities and names that is as fantastic as it is unique -- that is to say, inaccurate.

> At one point, [Bodhidharmatrāta][94] ascertained that the beings in the land of Han (China) were possessed of the Mahāyāna disposition. And so he dispatched two of his disciples, Buddha and Yaśas, to go to the land of Qin (China) and preach the Dharma of immediate awakening. When the worthies of the Qin first heard, they were doubtful and none would believe. [The monks] were driven out and pursued to the Donglin monastery on Mt. Lu.
>
> At that time, Dharma Master Sir Yuan (Huiyuan) was there, and he asked them, "Worthies, what Dharma have you brought, that you were thus cast out?" Thereupon, the two Brahmins put out their hands and said to Sir Yuan, "The hand changes to a fist and the fist changes to a hand. Does this happen quickly or not?" Sir Yuan responded, "Very quickly." The two Brahmins said, "This is not quick. Defilement is none other than bodhi. *This* is quick."[95] Sir Yuan was deeply impressed, and thereupon realized that bodhi and defilement are one and the same. Then he asked, "In this other country, from whom did you learn this Dharma.?" The two Brahmins replied, "From our teacher, Dharmatrāta." Sir Yuan [was moved to] a faith profound indeed.

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[94] 菩提達摩多羅, i.e. Bodhidharma. Use of the name Bodhidharmatrāta, unique to the *Lidai fabao ji*, was criticized in Shenqing's *Beishan lu*. However, the portmanteau patriarch was later to become quite popular as an arhat in Tibet. See Demiéville 1978: 45-49.

[95] The *locus classicus* for this dialogue is the famous passage in the *Lotus Sūtra* in which the seven-year-old daughter of the Nāga king demonstrates her enlightenment. See Watson, trans., 1993: 188.

Then the two Brahmins translated the *Chan-teachings Scripture*[96] in one fascicle, which completely elucidates the Chan (dhyāna) Dharma of both the Greater and Lesser Vehicles. All the Dharmas transmitted from the Western Kingdom are quoted in the preface to the *Chan Scripture*.[97] When the two Brahmins had completed the translation, they both passed into extinction on the same day and were buried on Mt. Lu, where their stūpa even now remains.[98]

It is remarkable how in this passage apparently "substantial entities," figures and texts with identities well-known to the eighth century Buddhist world, are forced to literally "do the splits" in the production of a hybrid monologue.[99] The story of "Buddha" (佛陀) and "Yaśas" (耶舍) fleeing Changan to take refuge with Huiyuan on Mt. Lu, there to translate a Chan/dhyāna scripture is obviously reminiscent of Buddhabhadra's biography. Through use of these biographical elements and the name "Dharmatrāta," Buddhabhadra and his lineage are yoked to a newly-created referent, the Chan founding patriarch "Bodhidharmatrāta." The singular figure Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 *does* exist in the sanctioned reality of the *Gaoseng zhuan*, and his biography immediately precedes that of

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[96] The *Chanmen jing* 禪門經, a.k.a. *Chanyao jing* 禪要經 (P. 4646, S. 5532), is an interesting apocryphal scripture of the early eighth century related to the "Northern" school, and it has some elements of esoteric Buddhism. See Yanagida 1961; Faure 1988: 154-155. However, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s have apparently confused the *Chanmen jing* with the so-called *Damoduoluo chan jing* discussed above in note 88. The *Damoduoluo chan jing* is a long list of Hīnayāna dhyānas divided into categories, with a discursive final section that is more "Mahāyānist," including visualization of Buddha-lands. Moreover, the key "preface" referred to in the next sentence is the preface to the *Damoduoluo chan jing*.

[97] The line "西國所傳法具引禪經序上 All the Dharmas transmitted from the Western Kingdom are quoted in the preface of the *Chan Scripture*." echoes Shenhui: "據禪經序中具明西國代數 [This is] according to the *Chan Scripture* preface, which elucidates the complete patriarchal succession of the Western Regions." (P. 3488; in Hu Shih [1930] 1970: 179.) Although much of the *Lidai fabao ji* account of Bodhidharma (with the exception of the Buddha/Yaśas story) is taken from Shenhui, here the author/s must have felt compelled to alter Shenhui's statement for the sake of consistency, because Shenhui's list of seven patriarchs preceding Bodhidharma, derived from Buddhbhadra's preface to the *Damoduoluo chan jing* (*T*. 15 (618) 301c), was expanded considerably in the *Lidai fabao ji*. This topic will be further discussed in the section on the *Lidai fabao ji*'s version of the patriarchal succession.

[98] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 180c5-17.

[99] For a discussion of these Saussurian references in relation to Chan, see Faure 1991: 31.

his contemporary Buddhabhadra. Moreover, his biography provides an interesting counterpoint to that of Buddhabhadra. Like Buddhabhadra, he was known at court in Changan for his strict observance of the precepts. Unlike Buddhabhadra, he remained there as an honored guest, for he had been Kumārajīva's teacher in Kashgar and was invited to Changan at Kumārajīva's urging. He initially refused the invitation, saying that he would not come unless the emperor promised not to make him live with women, the fate Kumārajīva suffered.[100] One even wonders if perhaps Buddhabhadra, who in contrast to the worldly monks of the court "alone guarded his purity and did not go along with the crowd,"[101] was not a scapegoat for Buddhayaśas, who was similarly puritanical but evidently beyond the reach of intrigue.

There is a kind of vaudeville team quality about the Dharma-in-unison of Buddha and Yaśas, who die on the same day and are stūpa-fied together. As they are so clearly tropes, the text they translate also ineluctably becomes a figurative work, signifying much but affixed to nothing. It is hard to know how to translate the title/s, for while the *Chanmen jing* is an apocryphal scripture related to the nascent Chinese Chan trend, the *Chanjing* quoted by Shenhui quoted by the *Lidai fabao ji* is the Indian dhyāna-sūtra of Dharmatrāta, the *Damoduoluo chan jing*. Buddhabhadra/Dharmatrāta's dhyāna-sūtra is an important repository of lineage, but the Dharma it contains is precisely the kind that is disparaged as Hīnayāna dhyāna in the *Lidai fabao ji* passage quoted previously, enumerating visualizations of bones, the sun, the moon, Buddhas, and the like. Moreover, immediately following the passages giving examples of non-Chan Hīnayāna dhyāna, the *Lidai fabao ji* quotes the "real" (apocryphal) *Chanmen jing* in order to controvert them, as follows: "Practicing seated dhyāna one sees voidness without anything at all, and if one sees Buddhas with thirty-two characteristics, of variegated

[100] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Buddhayaśas, *T.* 50 (2059) 334b3-7.

[101] *Ibid.*, biography of Buddhabhadra, *T.* 50 (2059) 335a20.

radiance, flying up into the air and manifesting transformations at will -- these are all one's own mind tumbling over and over, bound up in a demon's net. In void and tranquil extinction, you see that such things are merely empty delusion."[102] The dream of Emperor Ming which the *Lidai fabao ji* credits as Buddhism's initiatory moment in China would certainly thus fall into the category of "empty delusion."

By quoting the *Chanmen jing* the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s escape from one net only to fall into another, for the *Chanmen jing*, speaking as it does of seated dhyāna and tranquil extinction, is still attuned to early Chan "Northern school" notions of contemplation rather than the formless practice and doctrine of no-thought that the *Lidai fabao ji* takes as its device. And indeed, although this section of the *Lidai fabao ji* at first glance might seem an indiscriminate jumble of quotations from dhyāna texts, Mahāyāna sūtras, and apocryphal works of various stamps, there is clearly a teleology at work. Having counteracted Hīnayāna dhyāna, the *Chanmen jing* is in its turn rendered inert by a spate of quotes, including one from the *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra* as follows: "I do not enter samādhi, I do not dwell in the practice of seated dhyāna. Non-producing and non-practicing, neither movement nor absorption, this is the unborn dhyāna."[103] It is moreover teleology with an apocalyptic edge, for the penultimate quotations are dire predictions of the threat to the Dharma posed by monks who "establish a false śramana law."[104] Seemingly standard admonitions against precept-breaking are used as a segue to introduce Shenhui's ideology of transmission of the robe as token of the true Dharma, always imperiled by false, reified notions of practice. However, as seen already in Huiyuan's preface to a Hīnayāna dhyāna-sūtra, reification of the notion of transmission

[102] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 183a19-22. This is a relatively direct quotation; for the *Chanmen jing* passage, see Yanagida 1961: 878.

[103] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 183a24-25.

[104] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 183b15.

itself may have provided a certain security against the anxiety that the Dharma is as arbitrarily composite and as subject to decay as anything else, but at the same time it created a host of other complications. Not the least of these complications was the question of how to trace the path of transmission that "lies outside of words and is not delineated in the scriptures."

Kumārajīva

As noted above, Buddhabhadra was enabled to lecture to Huiyuan at Mt. Lu thanks to his having become *persona non grata* at Changan. His removal, with disciples, was attributed to the hostility of those who resented Buddhabhadra's implicit criticism of the great translator Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344-413). Buddhabhadra apparently affronted by his more-austere-than-thou observance of the precepts, and was known for his rigorous if "Hīnayānist" standards of dhyāna.[105]

In this context, let us return once more to Huiyuan's preface and the fear of the deterioration of the Dharma alluded to therein. Transmission is dependent upon an esoteric line of worthy vessels, and although Huiyuan does not say so, is also thus compromised by their fragility. The bodies of monks were at risk due to external vicissitude in many senses -- threatened by violence, coercion, and temptation. Buddhabhadra's example served to highlight the perilous situation of Kumārajīva and those of the clergy who lived in luxurious surroundings and associated freely with the powerful at court.

The two *Gaoseng zhuan* stories about Kumārajīva's chastity underscore this point. It is related that Kumārajīva was sought and taken as booty in the war that destroyed his

[105] The pretext was the affair of Buddhabhadra's vision of "five ships setting out from his native country." He was accused of infraction of the Vinaya prohibitions against pretending to supra-normal powers for personal aggrandizement. The ships eventually arrived, and Huiyuan wrote to Emperor Yao Xing arguing that Buddhabhadra's reputation be restored. *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 335a21; b1; b14.

homeland, Kucha. The victorious Qin general Lu Guang 呂光 then decided to assault the monk's integrity by plying him with a princess and strong drink. When the latter had caused Kumārajīva to succumb to the former, he was then forced to ride unruly animals. Kumārajīva's chief virtue in the face of all indignities was that he "did not change color." The general desisted, but what eventually won him over completely was Kumārajīva's skill in accurate prediction. Much later in life, enjoying prestige as honored translator in the court of the Later Qin 後秦 emperor Yao Xing 姚興 (r. 393-416), Kumārajīva was made to live in luxurious quarters with ten beautiful women in order that his talent be transmitted to the next generation physically as well as spiritually.[106] A point to note here is that the women, like the unruly animals, are merely instruments of those who wish to capture, subdue, and appropriate the power of the Law as it is embodied in the monk. As will be seen later in the examples of Shenxiu and Zhishen, the continence of monks can become an arena in which conflict between secular and monastic authority is played out.

The opportunities and dangers presented by increasing involvement of the clergy in the extremely unstable world of fourth and fifth century Chinese dynastic politics certainly evoke a sense of temporal uncertainty. The extant literature further attests to a sense of the gossamer fragility of the earthly thread of the Dharma, a fluctuating geography which included not only India as the semi-mythical source of the teachings, but also the Central Asian countries of birth and places of training of many of the Western monks. One has only to note how Kumārajīva's Kucha fared at the hands of Lu Guang.

Changan court Buddhism as it appears in the *Gaoseng zhuan* was a multicultural affair with undercurrents of tension, where political and soteriological concerns both reinforced and threatened one another. There are numerous examples of monks being asked to use their powers of prognostication to serve as military advisors, and also

[106] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Kumārajīva, *T.* 50 (2059) 330a-333a.

examples of rulers and generals who, not heeding such advice, come to grief. These portrayals of the political benefits of piety rest upon the proposition that rulers place faith both in the monk's other-worldly neutrality *and* in his loyalty to his patron.

A similar double indemnity is tacitly at work in the painstaking translation efforts of Kumārajīva and Emperor Yao Xing. Sūtra recitation from memory in Sanskrit were prized features of the Western monks' miracle-working (and state-enhancing) repertoire, and the words of the Buddha's "face-covering tongue" in their original purity were invocations of the splendid otherness of the foreign religion. At the same time, translation as "skillful means" was an expression of Buddhism's all-embracing transcendence. The Dharma had come to China and was therefore destined to be Chinese, the sūtras themselves urged their own reduplication and propagation and so perforce must be translated for the benefit of all sentient beings. Daoan, beset with fears that the Dharma was being lost in the translation, appealed to Maitreya and was reassured in a dream. In the *Gaoseng zhuan*'s description of translation at Yao Xing's court, although the aid of Maitreya and supra-normal powers were presumably not lacking, there was also a great deal more material support and manpower, even personal emperor-power, devoted to improving the technical and literary sophistication of the translations.[107] Kumārajīva's translations are indeed more polished and accurate than previous attempts.[108]

In the end, the *Gaoseng zhuan* relates, Kumārajīva was unable to stave off death with his own recitations of dhāraṇī (talismanic Sanskrit verbal formulae), and he orders "a disciple from a foreign land to recite them in their native efficacy." This too fails, and he delivers a dying speech in which he expresses his regrets and hopes for the Dharma, and

[107] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2059) 332a25-c3.

[108] At the same time, Kumārajīva's oral explanations sometimes became indistinguishable from the "translation." See Demiéville [1950] 1973a: 481.

ends with this vow: "If what I have transmitted is without error, when my body is cremated, may my tongue be unconsumed by the fire." And after the fire died down, indeed, his tongue alone remained.[109] It is perhaps appropriate that this relic defies a certain Chinese logic of state and sanctity, in which the "uncooked" signifies barbarity, and only through being "cooked" in the sacrificial vessel of imperial influence does something become civilized and refined.

## Huiyuan

In the eyes of clerical posterity, the faint stain on Kumārajīva's integrity did not impugn his fecundity and reliability as a disseminator of the Dharma. The *Lidai fabao ji*, however, ignores him, and reserves its admiration for the political independence of his contemporary Huiyuan.

> The *Jin History* says, "When Huan was emperor, he wanted to cut back the Buddha-Dharma, and so he summoned Dharma Master Huiyuan of Mt. Lu.[110] The emperor said, 'We have observed recently that the monks and nuns are not sincere in their practice of the precepts, and there have been many transgressions. We wish to weed out [the Saṅgha]. Shall we at once carry out this culling process?' Sir Huiyuan responded, 'The jade that is extracted from Mt. Kun is covered with dirt and grit. The Li River is rich with gold, yet it is also full of gravel. Your Highness must respect the Dharma and value its representatives. You must not scorn its representatives or treat the Dharma with contempt.' The Jin [*sic*] emperor

[109] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T*. 50 (2059) 332c24-333a6.

[110] This passage does not appear in the *Jinshu* 晉書 but seems to be derived from Huiyuan's biography in the *Gaoseng zhuan* and the *Hongming ji* account of the 402-404 debate over whether or not monks should be required to bow to the emperor, materials which will be further discussed below.

Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369-404) was a powerful military figure and virtual ruler of the Eastern Jin territories from 397-404; in 404 he proclaimed his own Chu 楚 dynasty, but was deposed and killed six months later. See fascicle 99 of the *Jinshu*.

then issued a general pardon."[111]

In the *Lidai fabao ji*, this passage is sandwiched between the account of Emperor Ming of the Han quoted partially above and a passage extolling Buddhism attributed to the Saṅgha's most notorious patron, Emperor Wu of the Liang (r. 502-549), who had been inducted into the annals of Chan legend as an imperial foil for Bodhidharma. The passage featuring Emperor Huan serves as an example of resolution of the potential crisis posed by the regulatory bent of the Confucian state, a crisis always ready to surface within the dialectic of imperial relations with the Saṅgha. In spite of repeated appeals to long-established precedent in the various claims made for preferential treatment of the Saṅgha, Buddhist and secular works throughout the Six Dynasties, Sui and Tang indicate continual fluctuations in the degree of freedom allowed to monks by the state rather than any lasting mandate. Huan Xuan's *volte-face* was undoubtedly a decisive moment in the history of church-court relations, but the case was perhaps not so clear-cut as it is presented in the *Lidai fabao ji*.

The status of the Saṅgha *vis-à-vis* imperial authority was an issue that became implicated in the power struggles among the great clans of the Eastern Jin court at Jiankang 建康 in the south during the latter half of the fourth century. The controversy may be said to have started with the attempt to curb the autonomy of the Saṅgha in 340, when the imperial regent Yu Bing 庾冰 (296-344)[112] of the newly powerful Yu clan moved to limit Saṅgha privileges that had been established under the protection of Wang Dao 王導 (276-339) of the previously ascendant Wang clan. The issue was decided in favor of the Saṅgha, but this may have had more to do with the rising influence of their partisan, He Chong 何充 (292-346), a former client of Wang Dao, than the strength of the

[111] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 179c23-28.

[112] Regent for Emperor Cheng 成, r. 325-342.

arguments made on behalf of "the śramaṇa." Significantly, all the documents relating to the debate are generated from and remain within the state apparatus. The memorials and counter-memorials, in which the names of monks do not appear, are submitted by lay officials associated with one or another of the factions involved and the outcome was mediated by officials of the Ministry of Rites (*liguan* 禮官) and the Chancellery (*menxia* 門下).[113]

The crux of the matter was whether or not the monks should be required to bow before the emperor, which over sixty years later was to be the subject of Huiyuan's well-known treatise and the basis of his lasting reputation as the paradigmatic "defender of the Dharma." Before turning to the later and more famous debate that has left its traces in the *Lidai fabao ji* passage above, it is instructive to consider a few of the key arguments raised in the debate of 340. The main argument of Yu Bing's faction is that monks should not be allowed to get above their essential station as subjects of the state and that their special privilege constitutes the seed of destruction of the clear hierarchies of the Confucian mainstay, the five relationships. The pro-Saṅgha faction counters that the monks, in following their own order of discipline, support rather than detract from imperial authority. There is also a slightly threatening suggestion of possible ill-effects if the Saṅgha is thwarted:

> (From the edict promulgated by Yu Bing on behalf of the emperor Cheng)
>
> .... All such types (monks and nuns) belong to the people of Jin. As to their talents and wisdom, they are on a par with the average person. Yet they, on account of the unintelligibility of their doctrines, use their deceptive costume to override the law, flaunting the arrogant manners of their alien usage, and stand upright before the [Lord of] Ten Thousand Chariots (the

[113] This summary is based on Zürcher 1959: 106-110, 160-163; Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 339-346.

emperor) -- this is something which I cannot accept.[114]

(From the second memorial of He Chong, *et al.*)

.... Now, as soon as you would demand their submission you would destroy their Dharma. Allowing the custom of cultivating good to be abandoned in this sainted age, and letting common customs become the norm, must certainly cause it (*i.e.* the age) to be overshadowed by dread. It is because of this that your servants venture to feel uneasy.[115]

(From the second edict of Yu Bing on behalf of the emperor)

.... It is not that the Lord of Ten Thousand Chariots loves to be honored, nor that the common people of the empire love to be lowly. But if high and low are not set forth, the ruler's guidance is ineffective, and it is not [united as] one. If it is [divided in] two, then chaos results.[116]

(From third memorial of He Chong, *et al.*)

.... We always notice that when (monks and nuns) burn incense and chant prayers, they always put the dynasty first -- in their desire to bless the prosperity of the ancestral shrine their fervor is simply limitless. Serving one's superiors and exalting submission come naturally, and are the pith of the rules of conduct. Now, (for monks and nuns) this means undivided devotion to maintaining the Dharma.[117]

The last point is rather disingenuous, for the superiority that is served and the submission that is exalted by the Saṅgha is, precisely, *not* submission to the emperor. The defenders argue that the strict discipline of the monastic code cultivates decorum and

[114] The full debate is found in the *Hongming ji* 弘明集, *T.* 52 (2102) 79b-80b. The documents are also found in the *Ji shamen buying bai su dengshi* 集沙門不應拜俗等事, *T.* 52 (2108) 443c-444c. This passage is from the *Hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2102) 79b12-15. This and the following passages are translated in Zürcher 1959: 160-163, to which I have made minor modifications.

[115] *Ibid.*, *T.* (2012) 80a8-6.

[116] *Ibid.*, *T.* (2012) 80a19-20.

[117] *Ibid.*, *T.* (2012) 80b3-5.

submission, but it remains to be inferred that the proper object/s of that submission belong to an order other than the political. Both parties claim a right to undivided loyalties, for respect due to the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha by all the ordained seamlessly includes respect due to the ordained by all the non-ordained, including even the emperor himself. However, it was not until Huiyuan that this point was made explicit.

All the arguments in the debate of 340 remain secular and pragmatic, the subjects of dispute are the principles of governance and allegiance, not ontological claims. The detractors do make some disparaging remarks about the vague origins and otherworldly orientation of Buddhism, but they also say that it matters not if Buddhism is practiced privately at home just so long as it does not run counter to the established rites of the public sphere. The defenders also limit their arguments to practical matters, citing the beneficial influence of the monks on behalf of the ruler and the good example they set for the people. Again, it remained for Huiyuan to articulate a more distinctively Buddhist position.

Like the controversy of 340, the debate beginning in 402 was initially carried out between members of different clan-based coalitions. Huan Xuan, the military dictator who appears in the *Lidai fabao ji* as "the Jin emperor" had occasion in his own rise to prominence to become aware of the questionable nature of the role that certain members of the Saṅgha played in factional intrigues at court. Interestingly, this privileged equivocality now included politically influential nuns as well as monks. Huan Xuan himself propitiated the most famous of these, the abbess Miaoyin 妙音, who had a reputation for erudition and literary talent. In a high-stakes gambit, through her intercession he was able to have a pawn rather than a rival general appointed governor of a key territory which he later overran, slaughtering the weaker incumbent.[118]

[118] *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 biography of Miaoyin, *T.* 50 (2063) 936; Tsai, trans., 1994: 33-34.

The regulatory measures Huan Xuan attempted to impose upon the Saṅgha once he came to power were directed at these loose cannon in Jiankang but do not seem to have been prompted by anti-Buddhist sentiment in principle. He was rather sympathetic than otherwise, an avid participant in the *xuanxue* (abstruse learning) -infused aesthetic and literary culture of his time and place. The "anti-clerical" actions that he initiated could be seen as due respect for the power and usefulness of the clergy rather than simple oppression. The biographies of Huiyuan and two other monks feature episodes in which Huan Xuan attempts to persuade them to give up the reclusive life in order to serve as his official advisors.[119] Even if spurious, these traces are not necessarily inconsistent with letters in which he insists that monks and nuns should either abide by the rules constituting their special (sequestered) status or give it up. Prior to reopening the issue of whether or not monks should bow to the ruler he may have attempted a registration of monks in the region of the capital,[120] and Huiyuan's biography also attests to Huan Xuan's interest in weeding out spurious members of the clergy. The apparent inconsistencies could also be attributed to a conflict between the hagiographic topoi of the *Gaoseng zhuan* and the topoi of the dynastic histories.

However, the frequency of the scene in which a ruler or official unsuccessfully attempts to retain a monk (a favorite of the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s) should not inure us to the delicate paradox involved. The Saṅgha's access to the ruling elite depended upon this blank refusal, however seldom the chit was actually "signed" -- for the personal prestige accruing to their patrons also rested upon the premise of the clergy's freedom to leave. Official desire to draw clearer lines between the political and religious spheres dovetailed with the Saṅgha's desire not to let its own spheres of interest and disinterestedness appear

[119] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Huiyuan, *T.* 50 (2059) 360b16; see also *ibid.*, biography of Huichi 慧持, 361c14; and *ibid.*, biography of Daozu 道祖, 363a13. See Zürcher 1959: 214, 397n. 175-6.

[120] See Zürcher 1959: 397n. 177.

too blurred, yet conflict inevitably arose over who had the right to draw the lines. This is what we find in the *Gaoseng zhuan* episode that superficially resembles the *Lidai fabao ji* account of Huan Xuan's attempted selection of the Saṅgha. Here, contrary to the *Lidai fabao ji*, we see Huiyuan reinforcing Huan Xuan's efforts such that the Saṅgha through Huiyuan as its representative becomes responsible for its own selection.

> Shortly afterwards Huan Xuan wanted to select the Saṅgha, and so he instructed the magistrates under his jurisdiction as follows: "Those among the śramaṇa who are able to recite the scriptures, or who excel in explaining their meaning and principles, and those who are obedient and correct in observing the Rules, are worthy to propagate the great Doctrine. All those who deviate from these (standards) shall be secularized. Only Mt. Lu is a place where the virtue of the Way dwells -- it will be exempted from investigation and selection."
>
> Huiyuan sent a letter to Huan Xuan: "It is already a long time since the Buddhist doctrine has become degenerated and mixed with impure elements. Whenever I come across (such things), indignation fills my bosom. I was always afraid that fate would take an unfavorable turn, and that false and true would be lost together. But now I see (that you will) purify those of the Way, and this instruction surely agrees with my innermost intentions. If the (clear) Ching river is separated from the (muddy) Wei, then pure and impure will come into different situations. . . . Once this is done, the result will be that those who gloss over their falsity will be cut off from the great open road (of the Saṅgha), and those that cherish the truth will be freed from the evil of incurring the criticism of the laity. The Way and the world will mutually prosper, and the Triple Gem will be restored to its former glory." Subsequently he enlarged the scope of Huan Xuan's regulations, and Huan Xuan followed his advice.[121]

The metaphors in the *Lidai fabao ji* passage and in this account have precisely the

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[121] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Huiyuan, *T.* 50 (2059) 360b18-28. Zürcher, trans., 1959: 250, with minor modifications.

opposite significance -- in the *Lidai fabao ji* the Saṅgha is sacrosanct regardless of the inevitable dross mixed in with its treasures, while for Huiyuan admixture threatens the very existence of the Saṅgha. In Huiyuan's biography, this letter to Huan Xuan immediately precedes the account of Huan Xuan's renewal of the old dispute over homage to the ruler. In that final interchange Huan Xuan did eventually back down, but Huiyuan's clear statements about the need for autonomy of the clergy are thus presented within the context of Huiyuan's sympathy for Huan Xuan's concerns and a mutually respectful relationship between monk and statesman.

Once again, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s combined different aspects of a complex situation into a shape that reflects their own issues, in this case the Bao Tang school's vulnerability to the kind of selection that Huan Xuan -- and more to the point, a number of Tang emperors -- had proposed. The Tang founder Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (618-626) had fired the opening salvo with his *Shatai Fo Dao zhao* 沙汰佛道詔 (Edict to Sift Out Buddhism and Daoism), in which criticism of Buddhism predominates. He employed the same metaphor of jade and stones that was later used to opposite effect in the *Lidai fabao ji*:

> During the time that We have borne up the imperial canopy of Heaven, We have prospered the teaching of the Dharma, have been intent upon its benefit and cared about its protection. We wish to cause jade and stones to be separated, and fragrant and fetid plants to be distinguished. [In order that] the subtle Way long endure, the field of merit be forever established, and the originally pure source be upheld, [the Saṅgha] should comply with the sifting-out of its gravel. [122]

Emperor Gaozu was unable to implement his proposed regulation of the Saṅgha due to his son's successful bid to seize the throne. The second Tang emperor Taizong 太宗

[122] *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Old Tang History), Zhonghua shuju ed. 1975: 1.17.

(626-649) rescinded his father's edicts but he too, once his reign was stabilized, tried to bring the Order to order. Then, towards the end of his life, his increasing reliance on the impressive Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664) caused him to reverse his own policies restricting ordination.[123] And so it went, with successive Tang emperors trying various means to control and yet co-opt Buddhists. The emperor Dezong 德宗 (779-805), during whose reign the *Lidai fabao ji* was composed, joined the ranks of his ancestors who began their reigns by taking a stand against Buddhist power only to be softened and baffled in their attempts to come to terms with Buddhist influence. Yet the reforms proposed early Dezong's reign could have hit very close to home for the Bao Tang school.

Around 780 Li Shuming 李叔明, a military governor in Jiannan 劍南, submitted a memorial that the monasteries under his jurisdiction (which would have included the Bao Tang monastery) be regulated for economic reasons. He proposed that officially-registered monasteries be limited to a fixed number of monks, and advocated that "All [remaining in monasteries] should be carefully selected practitioners of the Way, the rest must return to their initial [lay condition]. Unregistered hermitages and chapels are all to be destroyed."[124] His petition briefly gained momentum in official channels and an empire-wide selection was mooted but, luckily for the Bao Tang, Emperor Dezong was distracted by insurgent military governors from 781-786 and in the course of this struggle became a more devout Buddhist.[125]

The Bao Tang school members came by their appearance of laxity honestly, eschewing traditional Buddhist practice as a matter of principle, but their only hope for official recognition of these antinomian principles was in re-framing the terms by which

[123] Weinstein 1987: 11-27.

[124] *Jiu Tang shu*, Zhonghua shuju ed. 1975: 11.3579.

[125] Weinstein 1987: 90-97.

the ongoing debate over Saṅgha standards was to be carried out. Although Huiyuan's autonomy and Huan Xuan's submission was a heartening precedent, the issue of homage to the ruler was less germane for the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s. Moreover, the import of Huiyuan's famous treatise on the subject did not support their notions of Saṅgha.

Huiyuan's treatise was the final word in a debate that began in 402, soon after Huan Xuan had consolidated his position as virtual ruler of the Eastern Jin. Opening with Huan Xuan's official proposal to require the clergy to pay obeisance to the ruler, documentation for the debate consists primarily of letters between Huan Xuan and his trusted collaborator Wang Mi 王謐 (360-407), the grandson of the great statesman and Buddhist patron Wang Dao mentioned above. This exchange is followed by a round of letters between Huan Xuan and Huiyuan.[126] Though fascinating, an extended account of the controversy is not possible here. Suffice it to say that both parties display a much deeper familiarity with Buddhist doctrine and practice than had been evident in the debate of 340. A theme that recurs in the arguments in defence of the Saṅgha is the importance of ritual separateness, as evidenced in the following extracts from successive stages of the exchange.

Huan Xuan ends his first letter by saying that since monks, like all beings, rely on the life-sustaining emanation of the ruler's benevolence, "How then could they receive his virtuous power yet neglect his rites, be blessed by his favor but abstain from reverence?"[127] Wang Mi replies, "Although the śramaṇas' inner intentions are deeply fixed upon reverence, they do not [express this] by the forms of bowing in their rites, for their traces overfill the borders of countries, and transcend that which is within [physical]

[126] All the letters are found in the *Hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2102) 80b-85c, and in the *Ji shamen buying bai su dengshi*, *T.* 52 (2108) 444c-448c. A version of the exchange between Huan Xuan and Huiyuan is found in the *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Huiyuan, *T.* 50 (2059) 360c. The following account and consulted translations are from Zürcher 1959: 231-239, 256-264 and Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 836-844.

[127] *Hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2102) 80b21-23.

dimensions."[128] Huan Xuan counters: "As for the reverence of śramaṇas -- is it really that every little token of it is kept in their hearts? Obeisance is an important aspect of the rites of repentance, and in the case of their teachers, [monks and nuns] go up to the high seat along with the laity, bowing and kneeling. There is only a small difference in their rules [and ours]. If they are unable to forget forms in that case, why are they indifferent to manners in this?"[129] Wang Mi admits, "For the śramaṇa's Way, reverence is indeed the chief [virtue]. But the 'fords and roads' are in fact very different -- their import is not subject [to anyone]. Therefore, even the weighty forms enjoined by Heaven are no more or less than rites. The reason why monks display veneration towards their own teachers and elders is because the good effected by the doctrine is shared, so old and young gather in order of precedence. Good character and experience are related, so outer [forms] accord with the heart's response."[130]

Wang Mi first argues for the complete alterity of Saṅgha practice, and then inconsistently falls back on a Confucianistic appeal to the claims of seniority. The results of this exchange were also equivocal, for in 402 Huan Xuan did promulgate a decree requiring monks to pay homage, but in 403 he submitted all the documents, together with a request for his opinion, to Huiyuan. Huiyuan's reply forms the kernel of his treatise written early in 404, the *Shamen bu jing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論 (Treatise on [Reasons Why] *Śramaṇa* do not Bow to Rulers).[131] However, in the intervening period Huan Xuan's mind and his fortunes changed dramatically. Although he at first replied dismissively to Huiyuan's emotional appeal, one of his first acts as emperor of his newly

[128] *Ibid.*, *T.* 52 (2102) 81a2-4.

[129] *Ibid.*, *T.* 52 (2102) 81a18-21.

[130] *Ibid.*, *T.* 52 (2102) 81b25-28.

[131] The treatise is found in the *Hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2102) 29c-32b and in the *Ji shamen buying bai su dengshi*, *T.* 52 (2108) 449a-451b. An abbreviated version is found in the *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Huiyuan, *T.* 50 (2059) 360c-361a. See English translation in Hurvitz: 1957.

created Chu 楚 dynasty, early in 404, was to proclaim the Saṅgha officially exempt from acts of reverence to the ruler. Three months later, when Huiyuan was presumably at work on his treatise, Huan Xuan's forces were defeated by Liu Yu's 劉裕 loyalist Jin armies, and Huan Xuan himself was killed in June of 404. Liu Yu, upon his restoration of the Jin (to which he himself was to deliver the final *coup d'état* in 420, founding the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty), did not reverse Huan Xuan's final policy towards the Saṅgha.

Huiyuan's treatise revolves around the striking point made in his earlier letter to Huan Xuan, in which he claims that the Saṅgha is in effect a separate principality realized through its ritual distinctness:

> Even in the absence of the Way, one absolutely must preserve its ritual. If the ritual is preserved, the Dharma can be disseminated, and if the Dharma can be disseminated the Way can be sought. This is the great Dharma, identical and unchanging from ancient times to the present. Furthermore, the *kaṣāya* (monk's robe) is not court attire, nor is the *pātra* (alms-bowl) a vessel of the imperial audience chambers. Military and civil are different in appearance, western barbarians and Chinese do not mix. That persons who shave their heads and mutilate their bodies should heedlessly sully the rites of China -- this seems like the co-mingling of different species, which is something I find quite unsettling.[132]

Here the monk's robe is not merely a uniform of affiliation, but permeates deeply into "national" and even biological levels of identity. In contrast, the formless doctrine and practice endorsed in the *Lidai fabao ji*, and the indifference to proper rites regarding tonsure and robes for which Bao Tang followers were criticized, were designed to remove what was considered a specious ritual stain at the heart of the Triple Gem. It was according to this counter-intuition, perhaps, that the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s turned

[132] *Hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2102) 84a23-27.

Huiyuan into an advocate of admixture, of gritty jade and gravelled gold, and declined to quote the treatise for which he is most remembered.

In the first two sections of his treatise, Huiyuan argues even more forcefully for separation of the spheres of Saṅgha versus laity and Dharma versus civil law -- a separation which was indispensable to any claim for the preeminence of the Buddhist sphere. In the third section, in contrast to the appeals to utility and Chinese historical antecedent offered (gingerly) by lay Buddhist apologetes in 340 and again in 402, Huiyuan straightforwardly states that the power of the Way is greater than that of any temporal ruler. Couched in a dialogical format, he refutes Huan Xuan's previous assertion that the ordained and the laity alike rely upon and should show gratitude for the life-sustaining powers of the ruler:

> He who returns to the source and seeks first principles does not encumber his spirit with life. He who transcends the grimy enclosure (*i.e.* the body) does not encumber his life with feelings. If one does not encumber one's life with feelings, then one's life can end. If one does not encumber one's spirit with life, then one's spirit can be made subtle. The subtle spirit breaking the bounds -- this is what is meant by nirvāṇa. . . . Heaven and Earth, though they are great because they give life to living beings, cannot cause a living being not to die. Kings and princes, though they have the power of fostering existence, cannot cause an existing creature to be without woe. This is why the monk refuses homage to the Lord of Ten Thousand Chariots and keeps his own works sublime, why he is not ranked with kings or princes and yet basks in their kindness.[133]

Huiyuan goes on in the fourth section to tell his hypothetical interlocutor that Confucius and the Chinese sage-emperor Yao are themselves actually expedient

[133] *Ibid.*, *T.* 52 (2102) 30c13-23; Hurvitz, trans., 1957: 102.

manifestations of the Buddha.[134] Here he obliquely touches upon the Buddhist-Daoist debate over fundamental precedence that also enjoyed many manifestations, an early version of which is interpolated into the *Lidai fabao ji* account of the legend of Emperor Ming.[135]

The final, fifth section of Huiyuan's treatise is very interesting. After a long disquisition on the immutability of subtle, responsive spirit as the source of all differentiations, in a language and logic thoroughly imbued with the sensibilities of philosophical Daoism, the treatise is declared to be completed. Then, some "retired guests" who have read the treatise come in by moonlight for a chat in the Dharma hall. They raise a question -- why should a monk or nun who has just embarked upon the Way (or, by unspoken extension, those unfaithful to it) whose hidden virtue and future emancipation are in no way manifest -- why should these be favored and fed? The "host" replies by drawing an analogy between the clergy and those officials who are supplied with provisions and rewarded with carriage and clothing for conveying the ruler's mandate to distant barbaric regions.[136] He concludes:

> What is meant by the name "śramaṇa"? It means one who is able to disperse the dim dusk of beclouded common persons, to clear the dark road that is beyond change. . . . If so, then the merit of [providing] transport and the benefit of supplying the means of existence do not repay even [the monk's] intention to take the first vow. How much the less then, are [these benefits] able to answer the labor of the three works (*i.e.* purity of body, speech, and mind)? Such a person, though his body is still conditioned, has feelings not lodged in the near at hand. If one looks at the offerings of the four things (*i.e.* food, clothing, bedding, and medicine),

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[134] *Hongming ji.*, *T.* 52 (2102) 31a17-b9; Hurvitz, trans., 1957: 105-106.

[135] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 179c4-9. See note 40, above.

[136] *Hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2102) 32a16-27.

they are but as a mosquito passing before one. A mere drop of favor, is it worth speaking of?[137]

This was a clear statement of the Saṅgha's audacious challenge to the system of reciprocal obligation -- it claimed a right to the patronage of the spheres of family and state and offered in return only testimony to a territory beyond the reach of those spheres. The fifth century was to be the dawning of the age of the Saṅgha as an alternative economic power in China, and it can be argued that this was made possible by the success of Huiyuan and his epigones in securing a separate ritual sphere. Huiyuan was perhaps not the first to assert for monks the rights of extrality on the basis of disinterestedness,[138] but his biography draws attention to an unprecedented degree of political impunity based on wide-spread perception of his political neutrality. His biography claims two occasions on which he harbored known rebels, enemies of Huan Xuan and Liu Yu, respectively, and yet was praised for his non-partisanship by these potentially extremely dangerous military leaders whose authority he had by any other standards flouted.[139]

"Other standards" are indeed the crux of the matter. In contrast to Fotudeng, Daoan, and Kumārajīva, who although highly venerated at court were virtual captives of their imperial patrons, Huiyuan, who pointedly never left his domain at Mt. Lu, succeeded in "opening up the mountain" of previously uncultivated ritual/a-political territory. In

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[137] *Ibid.*, *T.* 52 (2102) 32a27-b6; Hurvitz, trans., 1957: 112-113, with minor modifications.

[138] The biography of Daoyi 道壹 (d. *ca.* 398) quotes his letter to the official charged with summoning him to return to the capital from his mountain monastery, in which he says that as monks are free from ordinary desires, ties, and delusions, they should not be subjected to ordinary duties and registration. He in effect claims extraterritoriality: "Thus, the people of a strange land are not ten thousand *li* away -- wearing coarse clothing and shaking pewter [ringed staves] they spread out over Heaven's own country." *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 357a16-28.

[139] See *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Huiyuan, *T.* 50 (2059) 359b7-15 and 360b7-16 for the incidents involving Liu Yu and Huan Xuan, respectively.

Huiyuan we can discern something of a genius for this territory of ritual. Traces of his "White Lotus Society" (Bailian she 白蓮社), to be discussed in the next chapter, show in him some of the combination of visionary and master of ceremonies that we also see in the seventh century master Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667). It is not out of character that Huiyuan enjoyed a reputation as a specialist in court ritual regarding "mourning garments," his chosen area of study before becoming a monk.[140] Huiyuan inherited Daoan's regard for formalism, but he also apparently had an early interest in such matters, an affinity which perhaps drew him to Daoan in the first place. Like Daoan, Huiyuan's concern with monastic regulations is well-attested; his biography shows him sending disciples off to the West to obtain Vinaya texts,[141] a number of his writings had to do with regulations for monks and nuns,[142] and he is credited with having successfully urged Dharmaruci to complete the translation of the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* that had been interrupted by Puṇyatara's death.[143] The scene of Huiyuan's own death is revealing. Ill, he refuses medicines that have been fermented because they would not be in accord with the precepts. When he is offered honey and water he orders the Vinaya master to read the rules to find out if such medicine is acceptable, and so dies while the Vinaya is being read.[144]

There is a resonance between Huiyuan's undying rectitude and the means by which he colonized the newly opened terrain. Buddhism claimed a precision about death, and in precision lay the allure of mastery. As in Huiyuan's statement that "Heaven and Earth,

[140] See Zürcher 1959: 218, 231, 398 n. 193 & 197.

[141] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 359b15-18.

[142] Besides Huiyuan's letters to Huan Xuan concerning regulation of the clergy, there are listed four non-extant prefaces apparently regarding rules, in Lu Cheng's 陸澄 *Falun mulu* 法論目錄, *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 84a3-5.

[143] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 360a8-14; *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 20a28-b18.

[144] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 361a29-b5.

though they are great because they give life to living beings, cannot cause a living being not to die," the effect of the action of the Saṅgha upon the state was to increasingly define the functions of governance as secular and this-worldly -- a distinction that its defenders were often only too happy to own, citing Confucius' well-known agnostic stance regarding the after-life. This avowed agnosticism was not however emphasized in the more recently influential practices of the Han dynasty. In the Han, state cult and state function had largely overlapped, at least in theory, in a permeable territory shaded by *xuanxue* (abstruse learning) where its borders faded into indistinctness or its cultic mountains loomed.[145]

Buddhist monks were not content to fade away into the obscurity of *xuanxue* or become elusive "immortals" of the mountain grottoes. As Bernard Faure has discussed in the context of the emergence of Chan, there is to be found throughout East Asia a deep-rooted hagiographic genre involving stories of monks who move into heterogeneous and autochthonous space and open up the universal, the birthless and deathless realm of the Dharma.[146] This shift is often signed by scenes in which a monk subdues a local deity in the form of a snake, and causes springs to gush forth or drought-relieving rain to fall -- all of which we find Huiyuan doing at Mt. Lu.[147] In the diaspora after the fall of the Later Zhao, Daoan is portrayed as designating two alternative modes of dissemination, for he sends his disciple Fatai 法汰 to preach to refined gentlemen in the area of the southern

[145] Bernard Faure says regarding the spatial features of the Han cosmological system: "In actual practice, Chinese cosmology was probably a spatially and temporally discontinuous whole, whose cohesion has been somewhat exaggerated by traditional Sinology. At any rate, it was later reinterpreted, adapted, and subverted by the popular tradition and by religious Taoism. However, its fundamental intuition was never questioned -- namely, that space is complex and unstable, that it is not always or everywhere the same; now diluted, now concentrated, it constitutes a 'heirarchized federation of heterogeneous expanses.' Even after the cosmological structure itself had collapsed, the perception of a 'qualitative,' heterogeneous space remained prevalent." Faure 1987: 345.

[146] See Faure 1987.

[147] *Gaoseng zhuan T.* 50 (2059) 358a22-28.

capital, while fellow-disciple Fahe 法和 is sent to cultivate tranquility amidst the mountains and streams of "uncivilized" Shu (Sichuan).[148] Huiyuan, on the other hand, once he had dealt with the problems of snakes and water sources, articulated a place within the wilderness for artistic and literary refinement on wholly Buddhist themes.[149] This universal and ideal space was to become the monk's unique demesne. Faure says, "In the same way that Chan hagiography was a composition of places that ultimately defined an empty or different spiritual space, the construction of monasteries created a new domain, a *u-topian* space that was a non-space or *non-lieu*."[150]

This metaphysical/mountainous/monastic space developed from and into a new political niche. In his foundational work on early Chinese Buddhist history, Erik Zürcher drew a connection between Buddhist place and the subsequent course of Chinese metaphysics: "The autonomy of the religious community in the Confucian state has been of momentous importance socially and intellectually; the emancipation of metaphysical thought from social and political philosophy, never realized in the circles of secular *literati* and politicians, took place and could only have taken place in the a-social and un-political community which the *saṅgha* claimed to be."[151] I would add, however, that this claim itself constituted the political aspect of the Saṅgha, an aspect not manifested in aberration, in the hypocrisy of its corrupt members, but rather in its formative appropriation of the "un-political" and its active propagation of the notion that metaphysics was "never realized in the secular circle."

The political turbulence of the fourth century fostered an aesthetic of reclusion, poverty, and relinquishment of official duty as a mark of integrity, often a matter of sheer

[148] *Ibid.*, biography of Daoan, *T.* 50 (2059) 352a13-15.

[149] *Ibid.*, biography of Huiyuan, *T.* 50 (2059) 358b12-c3.

[150] Faure 1987: 346.

[151] Zürcher 1959: 127.

survival. Given the near-constant state of war and the ubiquity of inter-clan intrigue, neither military nor civil careers could be expected to be of long duration. Monasteries offered the perfect refuge and escape for both conscientious and unconscientious objectors to the prevailing social conditions. Officials in service complained unstintingly about monasteries as refuges for criminals, conscript labor dodgers and tax evaders, while aristocrats declining duty retired there to cultivate an ethic of detachment.[152]

Moreover, the freedom that the monasteries represented was not just as an alternative domain but an alternative network. The legitimation of wandering as a way of life, with the monasteries serving as way-stations, was a boon to those for whom life within the familial and social order, with its attendant responsibilities and dangers, was undesirable. Though freedom of movement had perhaps at all times been greater than the official record of promulgated edicts might lead us to believe, Buddhism did provide a legitimate avenue, and the monk's robe some degree of protection, for those with inherent wanderlust or for otherwise "displaced" persons. Huan Xuan's attempted registration of the Saṅgha in 399 prompted a letter of collective protest from the monks of the capital, which says in part: "But the śramaṇa dwelling in the world is like an empty boat on a large stream. His coming has no objective, and he takes his leave at his leisure. Within the four seas he has no fixed abode for himself. When the country is in disorder he moves his staff with pewter [rings] and roams alone; when the Way prospers [the monks] crowd happily together."[153]

The threats and opportunities presented by this alternative network were incalculable. Buddhism appealed to those in client or vassal status as a new creditor and protector,

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[152] Raoul Birnbaum's work on and personal experience of the monasteries of modern Wutai shan attests to a very similar mix of the criminal and the cultivated, and he points out that the extremes of both goups would tend to gravitate to the same monasteries, sharing a taste for the most difficult of access. From a lecture at Stanford University, 3/16/95.

[153] *Hongming ji*, *T*. 52 (2102) 85c14-17.

breaking into the monopolistic and oligarchic traditional conceptions of economic and social "place." In hagiographical literature the role of the monk as subduer of local scourges was often directly linked to his being invited to take up residence in an economic position analogous to that of the local elite, as in the following example: "The tiger's ravages ceased from then on. The local inhabitants transformed the temple of the soil god into a Buddhist monastery where they invited Fa-an to reside, making over the surrounding fields and gardens as permanent assets for his community."[154] As a successful collector of clients and debtors, the Saṅgha soon had to be propitiated as a serious contender by the established "hosts" (or parasites, depending on one's point of view) of the political order.

As Jacques Gernet has discussed, the choice of mountains for monasteries was economically astute. Tamed mountains were traditionally the prerogative of wealthy clans, who commanded the labor resources necessary to make them livable and profitable. A monastery established in the mountains, which could also attract a labor pool due to its tax-exempt and conscript labor-exempt status, first concentrated on developing the immediate surroundings and then through influence, donations, and eventually by land-purchase, could gain control of the surrounding fields and waterways. Rights to tithes of grain harvest and rights to develop mills and transport on the waterways were the pillars of wealth in medieval China.[155] The other main pillar, sericulture, was barred to the monasteries by the prohibition against harming living beings (silkworms), but the monasteries received ample silk, a form of currency, through donations.

The full range of this economic niche was to be developed in the fifth and sixth

[154] *Shenseng zhuan* 神僧傳 (preface 1417) *T.* 50 (2064) 958b. The story is purported to date from the Eastern Jin. From Gernet [1956] 1995 (English translation): 114.

[155] Gernet [1956] 1995: 94-152.

centuries and beyond, and this is the backdrop against which we will see Wuzhu of the Bao Tang school isolated upon his mountain, proclaiming his conscientious objection to the well-fed, ritually fixated, and morally debile monks of the lowland monasteries around Chengdu.[156] In this scene, Wuzhu has been deserted by his fellow monks because his refusal to carry out any other recognizably Buddhist activity besides sitting in meditation is, it is implied, responsible for the dearth of donations to their remote temple. Before we proceed onwards towards this pinnacle, however, there is one last echo of the Jin that I wish to amplify.

The Mystique of Legitimacy

The quietism in the face of potential and actual violence alluded to above was not just a vogue among the disaffected and disenfranchised, but was in fact an important affective facet of the political ideology of the active members of the Eastern Jin ruling clans. The émigré court developed what Sinologist Michael Rogers has called a "mystique of legitimacy," a spirit of imperturbability which was to justify the mandate of the reigning Sima 司馬 dynasty (and its clients) in spite of the loss of the heartland.[157] This mystique developed around the notion that the essential realm was embodied in cultural and dynastic integrity and not in any particular territory. As Rogers characterizes it, the mystique of legitimacy was " a concept of a single legitimate strand of spiritual and cultural continuity which remained inalienable and indivisible, however straitened the political circumstances of the regime invested with it."[158]

In the face of a homeland to the north occupied by increasingly powerful usurpers,

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[156] The aptness of Wuzhu's Dharma name, 無住 "non-abiding," is a topic to which we shall have occasion to return.

[157] In the following discussion I am gratefully indebted to Rogers' careful 1968 monograph, *The Chronicle of Fu Chien: A Case of Exemplar History*.

[158] Rogers 1968: 52.

other enemies encroaching continually upon the borders, and the need to pacify the populations that they themselves had displaced, re-taking the north by force was not a realistic prospect for the Eastern Jin rulers. The alternative *wuwei* 無為 (non-action) political strategy of letting the expansionist hubris of one's enemies over-reach and doom itself is most clearly articulated in the story of the rise and fall of Fu Jian of the Qin as it appears in the *Jinshu*. Although the *Jinshu* was compiled in the Tang (in *ca*. 648) and the lessons of the tragedy of megalomania were emphasized in the narrative in order to give pause to Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-649), Rogers argues that there remains in it a core of authentically Jin sensibility.[159]

The "mystique" supported consolidation of the court in the south as well as minimizing past losses. Although recapturing the north was clearly desirable, the attempts made by Jin generals seemed more like raids than viable bids to retain Changan, and they served primarily to enhance prestige at Jiankang. Any commander who amassed enough strength on his own account to seriously threaten the Qin was perhaps equally dangerous to the Eastern Jin. Thus, in the face of continual inter-clan intrigue, the inevitable doom of a military figure over-extending and destroying himself was a useful lesson to promote a balance of power in an oligarchy rather than an ideology designed to encourage a single powerful leader. The superiority of virtue and disinterestedness over mere physical power had been a core theme in Chinese political philosophy at least as far back as the Warring States period, upheld in very different terms by Zhuangzi 莊子 (369-286?) and Confucius alike. Huan Xuan's failure in 402 certainly reinforced this ancient pattern, but his was actually a final minor chord in a ballad of the Jin that had already passed its climactic moment.

The portion of the *Jinshu* which chronicles Fu Jian's rise and fall is a mythopoetic history in which the Jin's *wuwei* spirit triumphs over Fu Jian's superior forces at the Fei

[159] *Ibid*., pp. 69 -73.

River battle of 383, where Fu Jian's advance and bid to reunite China under the Qin was perceived to have been broken. Although there were other factors involved, the Qin rout in this battle was followed in short order by Fu Jian's death and the dissolution of his empire. Fu Jian's defeat was considered a vindication of the virtue of the Jin regent Xie An 謝安 (320-385), a virtue that proved itself more effective than the aggressive military campaigns against the north pursued by Huan Xuan's grandfather Huan Wen 桓溫 (312-373). Therefore, this was also a drama of the Xie clan -- loyal to the Sima dynasty and spiritual heirs of the third century synthesis of Confucianism and philosophical Daoism manifested in the *qingtan* 清談 (pure conversation) tradition -- versus the Huan clan, militaristic adherents to an inflexible Confucianism and suspected, justifiably, as having ambitions to overthrow the dynasty.[160]

Against this background, the "mystique of legitimacy" is exemplified by Xie An's natural integrity and casual refinement, which is contrasted to the mists of hubris and ignorance surrounding Fu Jian in spite of his earnest efforts and the warnings of his advisors. It is a stereotyped interplay, familiar in European literature as well, between the ease of inherent nobility and the anxiousness of assumed rank. In the *Jinshu*, one of the voices of reason (and inherent nobility) attempting to warn the doomed ruler is none other than Daoan, who preaches a political strategy of non-action and refinement. Fu Jian indirectly asks him about the success of his southward "jaunt" (*nanyou* 南游), and Daoan replies in part:

> Why should you inflict hardship on your person in fast riding and make yourself mouth-weary in [exercising] universal domination, be combed by the wind and bathed by the rain, suffer the dust, and camp in the wilds? Moreover, the southeast is petty and insignificant; its land is inferior and its vapors pestilential. . . . If your civilizing virtue is sufficient to embrace

[160] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-62.

the distant, you will be able, without troubling an inch of weapon, to bring the Hundred Yue into submission while you are seated on your throne.[161]

Civilizing virtue was not the sole criterion for possession of the mandate, however. The true ruler had in his keeping two essential tokens, namely the state-transmitting seal and the liturgical music of the Western Jin. Interestingly, the seal, a mysterious jade talisman that had been part of the legends of dynastic succession since the Han, was said to have been recovered by the Sima court in 352, but the music had fallen into the hands of Fu Jian. The key victory of the Fei River battle was the recovery of a troupe of musicians who still preserved their sacred trust, and with the return of the music to the imperial ancestral temple in Jiankang the balance of dynastic legitimacy was considered to have been reestablished with the Jin.[162]

Along with chronicling the military campaigns and internecine struggles to preserve the integrity of the court in the south, the *Jinshu* also speaks of the efforts of the Eastern Jin rulers to restore their liturgy. From antiquity, "rites and music (*liyue* 禮樂)" had been a standard reference to statecraft, for music was seen as having the power to harmonize the human and natural worlds. It was not a power that called merely for trained musicians and instruments, but was activated through the response of the ruler. Rogers says, "Whereas the seal was magical, automatic, impersonal in its operation, the liturgical music required of the ruler a genuine inner assent to the moral and cultural values of which it was considered a manifestation."[163] Even though the music had been in Fu Jian's court for a time and Huan Wen had a set of musical instruments, neither could realize this most essential performance of state and authority.

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[161] *Jinshu* 114.4a, Rogers, trans., 1968: 160-161; includes the Chinese text from the *Bonaben ershisi shi* 百衲本二十四史 ed. in *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, Shanghai 1930-37.

[162] Rogers 1968: 54-58.

[163] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

This notion -- that inalienable personal worth coupled with inner assent to the mysterious continuity of the state constitutes the essence of legitimate dynastic succession -- did not originate in the fourth century, but the distinctive qualities with which it was imbued in the Eastern Jin became part of the coloration of the ruling ideology of the Sui (589-618) and Tang dynasties. Appropriation of the mystique by the northern dynasties did not come all at once. Emperor Wen 文 of the Western Wei 西魏 (535-557) repudiated the Jin title to cultural hegemony by claiming to resurrect the patterns of Confucius' model, the Zhou 周 dynasty; this was incorporated into the Sui founding ideology and thus bequeathed in turn to the Tang.[164] Through the efforts of Emperor Taizong's historians, the lessons of Fu Jian's fall and Xie An's equilibrium were further drummed home.

It may well be wondered why this essentially non-Buddhist historical excursus has been included here, but it is because I wish to draw attention to the parallels between this romance of Jin statecraft and some aspects of eighth century Chan ideology. In the romance of the patriarchy found in Shenhui's (and the *Lidai fabao ji*'s) story of Chan transmission, there is a similar opposition between "Southern School" natural integrity and "Northern School" anxious effort, and an analogous interplay between the talismanic robe of legitimacy and unqualifiable inner worthiness to receive and activate the transmission. In this study I am attempting to trace the evolution of a mystique of legitimacy within Chinese Buddhism and to take into account the various factors which contributed to the Chan version of "the concept of a single legitimate strand of spiritual and cultural continuity which remained inalienable and indivisible." Therefore, it is important to see this concept at work within the wider or deeper cultural context. The account given above is but one instance of a mystique of legitimacy that can be said to go back to Western Zhou (1050-771 B.C.E.) notions of the Mandate of Heaven (Tianming

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

天命) or back even farther to its mythical antecedents.[165] The Chan patriarchy never leaves the realm of myth and is also never separated from an intimate and intricately detailed historical landscape, as vividly realized as the fantastic lands and beings of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas).

In the next chapter we will, unlike the Jin rulers, return to the north. In this chapter I have traced a few of the means by which the mythos and ethos of the Buddhist monk was transmitted and translated in the early period of Buddhism's Chinese incarnation. In discussing transmission of the formal qualities of spiritual and moral discipline in the fourth century, I have alluded to the complex mix of sensibilities regarding techniques of *dhyāna* practice and touched upon some of the anxieties and conflicts surrounding enactment of the Saṅgha code. Throughout, I have contrasted contemporary or near-contemporary accounts with the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' eighth century perspective on these sensibilities, anxieties, and conflicts.

In many of the issues of this chapter, interactions between Buddhist monks and the ruling elite figured prominently. We are far from having done with rulers, but in the following chapter I would like to consider the development of more broadly-based manifestations of lay Buddhism. I do not mean to set up an "elite" versus "popular" dichotomy, however. In Chapter Two, the issue of the autonomy of the Saṅgha vis-à-vis secular authority certainly had ramifications for the entire body politic, affecting such gut-level concerns as taxation and conscription. Likewise in Chapter Three, the phenomenal growth of lay Buddhism will be seen to encompass rulers who spent lavishly for merit as well as uneducated persons who adhered to the precepts.

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165 In Chapter Four I will discuss Anna Seidel's work regarding the important role that Daoist talismans and myths played in supporting dynastic legitimacy.

# CHAPTER THREE: TRANSMISSION AND LAY BUDDHISM IN THE FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES

> If the general term 'fortune' covers all the 'good' of honor, power, possession, and pleasure, it is the most general formula for the service of legitimation, which religion has had to accomplish for the external and the inner interests of all ruling men . . . . In short, religion provides the theodicy of good fortune for those who are fortunate.
>
> The annunciation and the promise of religion have naturally been addressed to the masses of those who were in need of salvation. They and their interests have moved into the center of the professional organization for the 'cure of the soul,' which, indeed, only therewith originated. The typical service of magicians and priests becomes the determination of the factors to be blamed for suffering, that is, the confession of 'sins.'
>
> --- Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions"

As in the case of monks who served as advisors to rulers, Buddhist clerics and laypersons were involved in a relationship which was mutually beneficial and yet thereby mutually vulnerable to the pressures of "external and inner interests." Lay people gained "merit," instruction, and emotional-psychological support from the Saṅgha. The concept of merit deserves some introduction here. From its inception, Buddhism depended upon the Indian notion of continual rebirth and held forth the possibility of attaining favorable future conditions in this life and the next by adhering to standards of moral purity and performance of good deeds. The traditional Buddhist goal was to attain rebirth as a monk in order to be enabled to practice and attain liberation from rebirth altogether. Following the lay precepts and performing good works were the primary way that laypeople could

feel themselves to be active Buddhists, and one of the most important of the merit-gaining activities was support of the community of monks and nuns. It was upon this basis that the clergy gained new members, soteriological *raison d'être*, and a livelihood from their devotees. Devotees were also at times economic clients as well as hosts, for the accumulation of resources within the Saṅgha allowed monasteries to act as lenders and landlords.

As with any other intimate and mutually beneficial relationship there were both compromises and challenges involved. Laypeople had it in their power to influence the clergy to compromise their creed of detachment and at the same time valued clerics with reputations of impeccable integrity. The clergy could use their authority to impose upon or deceive the laity and at the same time could inspire them to higher moral standards.

In the terms of Max Weber's observations quoted in the epigraph, the dynamic of "interest" denotes the interrelation between 1) the "external interest situation," or the economic and political needs inherent in the way of life of a "carrier strata" (in our case lay supporters) who influence the character of sacred values, and 2) the "internal interest situation," or the inner needs to which religious professionals respond with values that influence the rationalization of the way of life for society as a whole.[1] The "inner needs," self-justification and the desire to escape suffering, motivate and are met by religion's dual responsive functions, legitimation and salvation. Weber presents religion's response in terms of the differing needs of social classes at opposite ends of the scale, legitimation being the "theodicy of good fortune for those who are fortunate," and salvation being "the determination of the factors to be blamed for suffering, that is, the confession of 'sins.'"[2] One can readily see, however, that explanation/expiation for fortune's caprices are

[1] "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" *From Max Weber*, Gerth and Mills, eds., 1946: 287.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

desirable at both ends of the social scale.

In the case of Buddhism, there is circular tension between the economic and political needs of those who support the Saṅgha and thus "influence the character of sacred values," and the clergy's need to protect the integrity of their response to "internal interest" and maintain a privileged ability to address the issues of suffering and legitimation. Adaptability, universal inclusiveness, and salvific mediation are the notably Mahāyānist values that were better able to "influence the rationalization of the way of life for society as a whole." At the same time, however, the clergy protected its claim to represent these values by its exclusivity, by emphasis on ascetic codes of moral discipline and verification of the truth through rigorous meditative practice, an emphasis that was at times anathematized as "Hīnayānist."

Although scholars such as Jonathan Silk have questioned the Mahāyāna account of the stark opposition between the two tendencies,[3] it remains true that Chinese Buddhists for the most part accepted Mahāyāna prejudices unchallenged. Great stress was laid upon the universal inclusiveness of the bodhisattva path, in contrast to the path of *arhatva*, realization-in-extinction, which was the goal of traditional Buddhism attainable only by the ordained.

One of the early stages of the bodhisattva's career, usually the second of the ten *bhūmis* (grounds), involved taking the bodhisattva precepts (*bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*) and confessing to transgressions. This was said to convey merit efficacious in removing the effects of past evil action and creating the conditions for future good paths/fortune. Much of this chapter concerns the growing popularity of the bodhisattva precepts and the concept of merit in China during the latter part of the fifth century. The popularity of the bodhisattva precepts was part of the interest in issues of morality spurred by the long-awaited Vinaya translations of the early fifth century, but as we shall see this spur often

[3] See Silk 1994.

drove the Chinese clergy in new directions not encompassed by the Vinaya. Kyoko Tokuno, quoting a study by Ono Hōdo in which he found that nearly three-quarters of the two hundred Mahāyāna preceptive scriptures (including apocrypha) that he examined dated from the Six Dynasties period, concludes: "This statistic is a concrete barometer of the importance of moral issues within fifth-century Buddhism."[4]

These developments are not reflected in the presentation of this period of Buddhist history found the *Lidai fabao ji*. However, the influence of the notion of bodhisattva precepts was an extremely important step in the direction of the Bao Tang School's antinomianism. Without discussing the bodhisattva precepts, one cannot understand the passage from fourth century monks lamenting the lack of a complete Vinaya to the mass "platform ordinations" of all and sundry in the eighth century. As we shall see in Chapter Five, the platform ordination was a crucial aspect of the Bao Tang patrimony, as was the radical deformalization of it.

The phenomenon of mass platform ordination was a force of discontinuous, undiscriminating inclusiveness surrounding/at work within Buddhist monasticism of the latter part of the eighth century. The Bao Tang School's "formless precepts" eschewed the traditional practices that had been required of those who wore monastic robes. I believe that the *Lidai fabao ji* was designed to stress the inclusive aspects of the Bao Tang, their inheritance of the mass ordination charisma and the formless precepts, but was also meant to counterbalance these with an emphasis on exclusivity, by delineating a lineage and claiming legitimacy through the unique talisman of Bodhidharma's robe. More will be said on these points in due course, but through this brief overture I hope to underscore the significance of the "opening of the ranks" of the Saṅgha that began in the late fifth century -- at least in the ideal realm of apocryphal scripture.

In this chapter I will present a series of topics that show the relationship between lay

[4] Tokuno 1994: 195.

and ordained in the fifth and sixth centuries from a variety of different perspectives. These topics are: the criteria of authenticity of the Dharma, the background of the bodhisattva precepts, the cult of Maitreya, state Buddhism in the Northern Wei, and Chinese apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts. I do not claim exhaustive coverage of these topics, but focus on points at which the relative constituency of lay and ordained is implicitly or explicitly revealed. The key issues are 1) the blurring and rebuilding of boundaries between lay and ordained due to the increasing accessibility of bodhisattva precepts ordination, 2) the relatively unmediated channels of spiritual solace made available to lay believers through the cults of Maitreya and Amitābha, and 3) the great increase in the population of the Saṅgha from the mid-fifth to the mid-sixth century.

My aim in discussing these topics is to create a sense of the mutual dependence and the mutual inherence of the categories "lay" and "ordained" in Buddhist China of this period. The interdependence was necessarily social and economic; it was also functional in the more psychological terms described above, a division of spiritual labor. Furthermore, the identity of each group was defined with reference to the other, a differential self-identity in which changes in the character of either side necessitated re-negotiation of boundaries.

## Criteria of Authenticity of the Dharma

The Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna polarization was one of the primary changes that led to redefinition of the boundaries and functions of the Saṅgha. One important aspect of that polarization was the resultant destabilization of the criteria of authenticity of the Dharma, an inevitable consequence of Mahāyāna's inclusive tenets. The Saṅgha's transmissive function was particularly subject to the tension between liberal and conservative criteria, and this tension defined the parameters within which the bodhisattva precepts were formulated and reformulated.

In my discussion of the criteria of authenticity, I am deeply indebted to an excellent article by Ronald Davidson "An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism."[5] As his presentation is so apt, I will, begging the reader's indulgence with an appeal to a similar inclusive tendency in Chinese exegesis, summarize it here. I have chosen to emphasize those points which have bearing on the precepts.

According to Davidson, certain dynamics attributed to the Saṅgha during the Buddha's lifetime were to influence the shape of transmission after his *parinirvāṇa*. Two aspects that Davidson considers crucial were: 1) the formal means of transmission within and between communities, and 2) attitudes that evolved in the community regarding the sources and purposes of Dharma transmission.[6]

Early rejection of the option to mandate a standard linguistic basis for recitation of the Buddha's sayings was a significant factor influencing the formal means of transmission. The Buddha was said to have countermanded those monks who wished to render his sermons into a formal language and fix that as the correct form of transmission, and he upheld the view that monks should be allowed to learn his teachings in their own dialects.[7] Also crucial to early transmission were the circumstances favoring the spread of the Dharma through a network system rather than solely from the Buddha himself. The Buddha sent his disciples out to teach as soon as they became arhats. Thereafter they would intermittently cross paths with the master and gain new teachings, which they would subsequently convey to other monks met during the season of wandering or during the rainy season and fortnightly *uposatha* gatherings. There are many indications in canonical scriptures that this oral transmission involved memorization and recitation of long discourses, which were thereby formalized to a certain extent. The network and the

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[5] Davidson 1992.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 292.

[7] *Ibid.* For versions of this story in the Pali and sectarian Vinaya, see Lamotte [1958] 1988: 552-558.

recitation practices continued after the Buddha's death, and thus other monks were valued as repositories of the Dharma that no single monk had heard directly from the Buddha in entirety.[8]

Regarding attitudes that evolved in the community after the Buddha's death, Davidson says that the Saṅgha elders "were compelled to address the problem of the relationship between the Buddha and the dharma preached by him. Characteristically, the dharma was defined as that which was discovered by the Buddha, but it was neither invented by him, nor indeed was he the first of the Buddhas. Therefore, the speech of the Buddha embodied the dharma, yet the dharma went beyond the speech of the Buddha."[9] The definition of the Dharma was expanded to include words of the Buddha preached by his disciples and the words of a person inspired by the presence of the Buddha. Early on, the teachings of the disciples of the Buddha were also sanctioned, which opened the way to include others' teachings "when significant and when endowed with doctrinal principle."[10] This bespeaks a functional rather than a formal definition of Dharma: "Over and above these definitions of dharma, the functional orientation of the Buddhist masters led to a shift in perspective: the perception of a kind of circularity between the Buddha, his dharma, the reality discovered by him, and the cognition of that reality."[11]

The goal of the Dharma, the ability to develop realization and liberation from suffering, became also its litmus test, which could only be applied individually. "Thus we see that the dharma, as instruction, depends both on the Buddha for the revelation of

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[8] Davidson 1992: 292-293. Legend does designate a single exception, the Buddha's cousin Ānanda, his constant attendant. However, as Elizabeth Morrison pointed out to me in a letter, even Ānanda's versions had to be approved by the assembly.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 294.

[10] *Ibid.* From the Pali Vinaya, Oldenberg, trans., 1879: 4:15.

[11] Davidson 1992: 294.

its words and phrases as well as on the bhikṣu for the testing of its potency."[12] Furthermore, the monk's fitness (and vocation) to teach the Dharma was determined by his own embodiment of the Dharma, for he must be "possessed of the five aggregates of the dharma: moral conduct, concentration, insight, liberation, and the vision of the gnosis of liberation. . . . The circular dependence of the dharma as instruction and the monk as instructor is ultimately grounded in the nature of reality (*dharmatā*) toward which both are oriented, and which in turn is not even dependent on the Buddha."[13]

These attitudes towards doctrinal authenticity had, of course, ramifications for the official compilation of the Buddha's teachings, the codification of the canon. Traditionally, the collection of the teachings of the Buddha was said to have been undertaken at the First Council convened in the rainy season retreat immediately following the Buddha's death. According to the Vinaya this was due to concern about maintaining discipline, for one monk had been so ignorant as to claim that the Buddha's death released them from the necessity of following the disciplinary code.[14] The Second Council, too, was convened to deal with disciplinary infractions. Soon after, disputes led to rifts and eventually to sectarian division, and the legendary unity of the Saṅgha was lost.[15]

The image of a unified Saṅgha and Dharma was evoked in stories of the First Council, a cycle of legend that was probably established towards the end of the first century after the Buddha's death. Around the same time a ritual pronouncement of validity came into use, whereby teachings were to be guaranteed by the words: "This is

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] The legend of the first council also points to consensual rather than magisterial notions of authority: Mahākāśyapa persuades the arhats to assemble, Ānanda finally becomes an arhat in time join the council and recite the sūtras, and Upāli recites the Vinaya. For discussion of the two councils, see Lamotte [1958] 1988: 124-140.

[15] Davidson 1992: 298.

the dharma, this is the *Vinaya*, this is the teaching of the teacher." Davidson says, "Certain standards of authenticity, however, had to accompany this phrase, since the natural reaction of one not accepting this declaration is: how has it been ascertained?"[16]

The "four references to authority" (*catummahāpadeśa*) were instituted, whereby a monk could consider a teaching valid if it issued from the Buddha, a Saṅgha of elders, a group of specialists in one of the scriptural divisions, or an individual specialist therein.[17] In the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, however, the monk is also himself responsible for verifying a teaching, accordingly:

> Therefore, O Ānanda, bhikṣus are to follow the transmitted discourses (*sūtrānta*) and not to follow individuals.
>
> Moreover, O Ānanda, a bhikṣu might come and say, "Directly from the Bhagavān, this dharma, this *Vinaya*, this teaching of the teacher was heard and grasped by me." Now, O bhikṣus, that doctrine of his should not be praised or disparaged, but, having heard and grasped its statements and sounds, one should see if it conforms to the *Sūtra* and compare it with the *Vinaya*. If in doing so,
> a. it conforms to the *Sūtra*, and
> b. is reflected in the *Vinaya*, and
> c. does not contradict reality (*dharmatā*),
> then let this be said [to that bhikṣu]:
>
> "Truly, O Noble One, these dharmas have been spoken by the Bhagavān."[18]

Other versions of the criteria stressed verification of the source of a given transmission, but the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* introduced the additional caveat that the teaching must not contradict reality. This caveat, along with the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-*

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 300.

[18] Davidson 1992: 300.

*vinaya* emphasis on "following the transmitted discourses rather than individuals," indicates a desire to retain room for personal ascertation of the meaning of the Dharma, within a context of increasing formalization of textual authority.[19]

The injunction to follow discourses rather than individuals harks back to the idealized image of the early Saṅgha as evoked in a story from the *Gopakamoggallāna-sutta*, set shortly after the Buddha's death. In this story, a minister of King Ajātasattu asks Ānanda if the Buddha designated any monk as his successor or if the community has appointed any monk as leader in his place. When Ānanda replies in the negative, the minister asks him to explain the continued unity of the Saṅgha. Ānanda replies that the basis for this unity is the fact that all take refuge in the Dharma. Asked to elaborate, Ānanda says that recitation and maintenance of the rules of order, the *prātimokṣa*, represents taking refuge in the Dharma.[20] Davidson comments:

> When the early tradition isolated the rules of behavior as the center of gravity, it selected group conduct over individual leadership. All the other criteria reinforce the individual's position as the functioning member of a subculture, rather than as a leader or follower. . . . The empowerment for decisions was toward a broad spectrum of the community and was grounded in monastic decorum. This decorum was to be the backbone of the Buddhist tradition, right through the period of Vajrayāna monasticism.[21]

Davidson proceeds in due course to a discussion of Mahāyāna. As is well known, the factors contributing to the rise of Mahāyāna are under dispute, but it is agreed that the Mahāyāna mythology and apologia of the third and fourth centuries were constructed after certain Mahāyānist trends were already well-established. The criteria of authenticity

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 301.

[20] Paraphrase of Davidson's summary, *ibid.*, p. 302. From the *Majjhimanikāya* 3: 9-12.

[21] Davidson 1992: 302.

were maintained within the Mahāyāna construal of Buddhist tradition, but some arguments were necessary in order to make Mahāyāna scriptures conform to those criteria. Davidson calls these Mahāyāna arguments "philosophico-legalistic in nature, lacking the more critical approach prevalent during the first centuries following the Buddha's nirvāṇa."[22]

The problem of reconciling traditions of the Buddha's life with Mahāyāna conceptions of transmission of the Dharma gave rise to a number of creative solutions. Some sūtras maintained that the Buddha taught different levels of scripture at different periods of his life, or according to the different capacities of his audience. The most popular and enduring Mahāyāna classic, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (Lotus Sūtra), maintained that "all the dharma was spoken by means of just a single sound (*ekasvara*)." The *Tathāgataguhyaka-sūtra* went even further and proposed a kind of ultimate "reception theory" according to which "the Tathāgata does not preach even a single word. All doctrines and all the scriptures simply arise in the hearing of those around the Buddha, each according to his own proclivities."[23]

One example of the "philosophico-legalistic approach" is found in the ingenious arguments of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*. The author of this commentary argues for legitimacy on the basis of internal consistency, contending that Mahāyāna meets the standard criteria of "conforming to the sūtras and to the nature of reality" because it is as true to its own sūtras and understanding of reality as any of the other eighteen distinct "*śrāvaka*" sects (i.e. the pre-Mahāyāna sects) -- which are all as mutually incompatible with each other as they are with Mahāyāna. As for the criteria of "conforming to the Vinaya," the argument proceeds as follows. The purpose of the Vinaya is to eliminate defilement, "and for a bodhisattva the only real defilement is conceptualization (*vikalpa*).

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 306.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 308

Since the elimination of this conceptualization occurs through nonconceptual gnosis (*sarvanirvikalpajñānāśrayatvena*) arising by means of the practices found in the Mahāyāna scriptures, the Mahāyāna is reflected in this *Vinaya* of nonconceptual gnosis."[24]

Davidson ends his section on Mahāyāna with these remarks: "It is both ironic and telling that the difficulties of definition that surrounded the generation and codification of the sūtras throughout the history of Indian Buddhism finally caused Śāntideva to define the doctrine of the Buddha *as that which had its basis in the condition of the fully ordained monk*" (italics mine). He adds, "This is certainly very close to the consensual definition of the Buddha's teaching, which, as we have seen, held the earliest communities together."[25] The endurance of this "consensual definition" is summed up in Davidson's concluding observation applied to Indian Buddhism in general, that "Orthopraxy (*prātimokṣa*) was considered the 'essence' of the tradition, not orthodoxy."[26]

From the foregoing summary of Davidson's review of the criteria of authentic transmission of the Dharma, I wish to highlight several points. Elements such as 1) the tradition of consensual processes within the Saṅgha for verifying transmission, 2) a bias towards functional rather than formal definitions of Dharma, 3) the tendency to favor precedents valorizing individual verification over orthodoxy *qua* textual formalism, 4) the continuing importance of the criteria that the Dharma is that which develops realization and liberation, and 5) the tradition of "following discourses rather than individuals" -- all militate for maintaining unity not through any individual authoritative interpretation or lineage of interpretation, but through agreement on a common tradition of practice and discipline, or orthopraxy. For the "functioning member of the

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 312.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*, 316.

subculture," this allows much room for hermeneutical diversity, but it also mandates a strict distinction in this regard between ordained and non-ordained.

Mahāyāna speculation is far-reaching and non-discriminative in theory -- the "Vinaya of non-conceptual gnosis" is a breathtakingly simple and yet elusive reinterpretation of monastic discipline. It is in this respect very similar to the *Lidai fabao ji*'s slogan, the Wuxiang-Wuzhu teaching that "non-recollecting is *śīla*."[27] Doctrines such as these would seem to remove the distinction between lay and ordained, but even though there is recognition of this ideal in works such as the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*, the fallback position often tends to be akin to the eighth century Mādhyamika Śāntideva's conclusion that the doctrine is that which has its basis in the condition of the fully ordained monk.

This is the background against which I wish to view the development of the bodhisattva precepts. How do they affect the balance of the scales between laity and ordained? If the primacy of the Saṅgha as the locus of authoritative transmission and interpretation is at all diminished, what are the loci of validation that are offered in its place? What are the indications of tension, and of new forms of Buddhist practice, that arise with the growing popularity of the bodhisattva precepts in fifth century China? With these questions in mind, I will turn now to a consideration of the history and development of the *bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*.

## The Bodhisattva Precepts in Indian Texts

Let us review some of the classic Mahāyāna texts that deal with the development of a distinction between Mahāyāna precepts and those of the Vinaya. First and foremost, the *[Mahāpari]nirvāṇa-sūtra* doctrine of universal Buddha nature was addressed to lay and ordained without distinction. The *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* praises Mahāyāna precepts over precepts of the *śrāvaka*, or "hearer," a designation for disciples of Hīnayāna. Although the content

[27] *Wuyi shi jie* 無憶是戒. *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 189a15-18.

of the precepts is the same, Mahāyāna precepts begin with the vow to be awakened for the benefit of all beings. Importantly, confession and repentance were considered to destroy all the ill effects of past evil deeds, which contrast with the limited efficacy of repentance according to the doctrines of traditional Buddhism. The *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* teachings on moral behavior include illustrations from lay life as well as addressing monastic concerns.[28]

In the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, the second or "purity" stage of the bodhisattva path is grouped into three levels: 1) the precepts of traditional Buddhism incorporated into a set of ten proscriptions, 2) the obverse of the ten evil acts, the positive cultivation of right action, word, thought, and 3) compassion and altruistic acts towards all beings, which are to be further developed in subsequent stages.[29] The *Avataṃsaka* is thus the source of the basic tripartite division of Mahāyāna precepts that is expressed in the rubric of the Three Pure Precepts: avoid all evil, do all good, save all beings. This rubric was elaborated in many subsequent texts dealing more explicitly with the bodhisattva precepts.[30] The *Avataṃsaka* is in some sense a precepts text in its entirety, reinterpreting the basic acts of Buddhist practice in terms of the universal compassion and cosmological significance of the bodhisattva path, and reinforcing this path with visions of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and divinities.

Hirakawa Akira points out that in early Buddhist *Āgama* texts, the ten virtuous acts (*daśakuśalakarma-pathāḥ*, *shishanye dao* 十善業道) were the foundation of both lay and

[28] *Daban niepan jing* 大般涅槃經 (*[Mahāpari]nirvāṇa-sūtra)*, *T*. 12 (374) & (375). See Demiéville 1929-30: 143.

[29] *Da fangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 (*[Buddha]avataṃsaka-sūtra*), *T*. 10 (278) & (279). As is well-known, the five basic precepts of Buddhism are: not killing, not stealing, not indulging in sexual misconduct, not lying, not taking intoxicants. The *Avataṃsaka* virtues included the first four, to which are added: not slandering, not speaking vulgarly, not speaking frivolously, not being covetous, not being moved to anger, not entertaining false views. See Thomas Cleary, trans., 1993: 714-721; Mochizuki: 1570-1573.

[30] Demiéville 1929-30: 142-143.

ordained practice. In *Abhidharma* texts, however, basic precepts for lay and ordained were differentiated in content and format. Hirakawa claims that the emphasis on the precepts of the ten virtues in the *Avataṃsaka*, and even earlier, the ten *pāramitās* of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, represent a reversion to and reinterpretation of the earlier Buddhist notion of ten virtuous acts.[31] In this connection, he discusses the apparent ambivalence of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*. This influential work, attributed to Nāgārjuna but probably compiled in China by Kumārajīva, lauds the superior motivation and efficacy of Mahāyāna precepts but does not include special prescriptions for the bodhisattva precepts. Although separate precepts for lay and ordained are prescribed in one section, in another context the all-inclusive ten precepts are advocated for both.[32]

The *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* is derived from the section on the ten *bhūmis* in the *Avataṃsaka* and has the same structure. Early Chinese translations of these two texts include a translation of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra* attributed to Dharmarakṣa (active *ca*. 265-313), another attributed to Kumārajīva,[33] and the translation of the *Avataṃsaka* attributed to Buddhabhadra (359-429).[34] These translations were highly valued for their inspiring visions of the bodhisattva path and were responsible for popularizing the idea of distinctive bodhisattva precepts.

At least in the textual realm, the notion of bodhisattva precepts seems to have well-predated their activation through specific ordination ceremonies. Reviewing the development of ordination ceremonies through Buddhist history, Paul Groner offers the following cogent summary:

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[31] Hirakawa 1960: 534.

[32] *Ibid*., p. 543 n. 28. See *Dazhi du lun* 大智度論, *T*. 25 (1509) 161a-c; 395b.

[33] 1) Dharmarakṣa, trans., *Jianbei yiqie zhide jing* 漸備一切智德經 (*Daśabhūmika-sūtra*), *T*. 10 (285). 2) Kumārajīva, trans., *Shizhu jing* 十住經 (*Daśabhūmika-sūtra*), *T*. 10 (286).

[34] *T*. 9 (278), see note 29, above.

> The ordination procedure changed during the Buddha's lifetime as the order grew larger and new procedures and precepts were formulated. However, a comparison of passages in extant *vinayas* reveals that the descriptions of full ordinations agree, indicating that the ceremony's format did not change very much over the centuries or as Buddhism was transmitted to China from India. . . . The instructions in the *vinaya* for initiating novices or administering the lay precepts were much sketchier than the directions for ordaining monks and nuns. As a result, these ceremonies did vary and change over time. . . . In contrast, bodhisattva ordinations were not described in the *vinayas*. Usually brief descriptions of them were found in Mahāyāna *sūtras* which included sets of bodhisattva precepts. Although some of these *sūtras* were more respected than others by the monks, none of them occupied a position of such authority that it alone could serve as the major source for bodhisattva ordinations in the same way that the *vinaya* had served as the authority for Hīnayāna full ordination.[35]

It has been argued that the earliest source for a bodhisattva ordination ceremony was the *Mañjuśrīparipṛcchā*.[36] However, the Indian scripture that was most influential for the content and form of the bodhisattva ordination ceremony in China was the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, derived from a section of Asaṅga's fourth century *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*.[37] I will here include a summary of the precepts ceremony in the

[35] Groner 1990b: 223.

[36] *Wenshushili wen jing* 文殊師利問經, *T.* 14 (468). See Groner 1990b: 234.

[37] The history of Chinese translations of these texts is complex. The *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* is one of a group of texts of the Vijñaptimātra school of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. It was not translated into Chinese in entirety until the seventh century, as the *Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論, *T.* 30 (1579), by Xuanzang 玄奘, who also translated the related precepts texts *T.* 24 (1499) and *T.* 24 (1501). However, there are two fifth century translations of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, 1) the *Pusadichi jing* 菩薩地持經, *T.* 30 (1581), trans. *ca.* 414–421 by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖, and 2) the *Pusa shanjie jing* 菩薩善戒經, *T.* 30 (1582), trans. *ca.* 431 by Guṇavarman 求那跋摩. Excerpted from 2) by the same translator, the *Youpoli wen pusa shoujiefa* 優波離問菩薩受戒法, *T.* 30 (1583), is a separate one-fascicle ordination-method text. In addition, there is another translation by Dharmakṣema, the *Pusa jieben* 菩薩戒本, *T.* 24 (1500), a precepts text that appears to be compiled from parts of both the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. See Tang [1938] 1991: 827; Demiéville 1929-30: 144–145; Kuo 1994: 39-40.

*Bodhisattvabhūmi*, since it became the template for later apocryphal Chinese bodhisattva precepts texts.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* opens with an assertion of the superiority of the bodhisattva precepts over the *śrāvaka* precepts, and then explicates the Three Groups of Pure Precepts (*sanju jingjie* 三聚淨戒). The three groups are: 1) Precepts of Restrictions (*saṃvaraśīla*, *luyi jie* 律儀戒), the traditional (*śrāvaka*) precepts differentiated according to the religious status of the petitioner -- monks and nuns observed the Vinaya precepts, and novices, candidates and laypersons each observed a different set; 2) Precepts of the Good Dharma (*kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhaka-śīla*, *sheshanfa jie* 攝善法戒), meritorious deeds of body, speech, and mind that cultivate the path of awakening; and 3) Precepts on Behalf of Beings (*sattvārthakrīyā-śīla*, *shezhongsheng jie* 攝眾生戒), which comprise eleven categories of cultivation of altruistic acts.

Explication of the Three Groups of Pure Precepts is followed by the ordination ceremony, in which the petitioner prostrates before the master and states his/her request to receive the precepts. He/she pays homage to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and obtains the benefit of their merit in order to be purified. Prostrate before an image of the Buddha, he/she repeats the request to receive the precepts, and concentrates on the merit obtained thereby. He/she is asked to repeat three times that he/she is a bodhisattva, follows the path of awakening, and desires to receive the Three Groups of Pure Precepts. Then the master requests administration of the precepts from the Buddhas and bodhisattvas on behalf of the petitioner, and the ceremony is concluded. The text has a list of the categories of transgressions and the levels of confession and contrition

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There is another rather elusive text that may have been a source for the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. Hirakawa discusses a *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa* that is known only from quotations in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* by Śāntideva. (Nalinaksha Dutt edited these quotations and published them in 1931 as the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣasūtraṃ*.) It is fragmentary, so its sources and contents in detail are not clear. Although it does not seem to be identical to the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, it has some points in common. See Hirakawa 1960: 536-539.

necessary to exculpate them. Finally, it is said that in the absence of a qualified member of the clergy, one can administer the precepts to oneself according to the formula given in the text.[38]

The attitude towards the precepts contained in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is both inclusive and polemical. It is inclusive to the point of making provision for self-administered precepts, and yet it preserves traditional distinctions between precepts for monks, nuns, novices, postulants, and laypersons. The text opens with denigration of the *śrāvaka* precepts, protesting that the *śrāvaka* precepts are intended solely to destroy passions, whereas according to the bodhisattva precepts one experiences passions without violating the precepts, infractions are not irremediable, and gradual cultivation is accommodated. However, these same *śrāvaka* precepts are fully incorporated into the first level of the all-inclusive Three Groups of Pure Precepts, with the distinction between clergy and laity maintained intact.[39]

This kind of tolerant but confining embrace is characteristic of many of the "all-inclusive" bodhisattva precepts schema. Such schema were very popular and yet, as Hirakawa Akira notes, would not bear detailed examination, for there are clear points of contradiction between the Vinaya (i.e. the maligned but retained "*srāvaka* precepts") and the bodhisattva ethos. For example, the Vinaya prohibits clergy from receiving precious metals and gems but the bodhisattva precepts stipulate that a bodhisattva must accept gold if it is offered by a merit-seeking devotee.[40]

The bodhisattva precepts texts could thus sanction greater acceptance of certain things into the Saṅgha, but still restricted access to certain people. Although provision is

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[38] *Pusadichi jing*, *T.* 30 (1581) 913b. See Demiéville 1929-30: 144-145; Hirakawa 1960: 526-530.

[39] For a discussion of the different schema for reconciling Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna precepts under the rubric of the Three Groups of Pure Precepts, see Groner 1990b: 225-227.

[40] Hirakawa 1960: 531-532.

made for self-administration of the bodhisattva precepts, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* stipulates that the self-ministrant must state that he/she had already received the full Vinaya precepts.[41] Self-administration of the full Vinaya precepts was not an option, as Groner states: "According to the *Yü-ch'ieh lun*, self-ordinations could not be employed to confer full monastic ordinations because they would not involve the external strictures on monastic conduct, leading to various abuses."[42]

Thus the basic boundary between lay and ordained is maintained in the Indian bodhisattva precepts texts, but it would be breached in the Chinese apocryphal precepts texts of the fifth century. Therefore, *en route* to north China in the fifth century, let us next look at one of the primary transmitters of the bodhisattva precepts to China.

Dharmakṣema

One of the translators of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* was particularly influential in spreading the notion of the bodhisattva precepts in China. This was the monk Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (385-433), a pivotal figure active during a time of warfare and instability following the fragmentation of the Former Qin empire in the north. He arrived in 412 at the Northern Liang 涼 capital of Guzang 姑臧 in the northwest,[43] and translated the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* under the sponsorship of the Northern Liang ruler Juqu Mengxun 沮渠蒙遜. According to Dharmakṣema's *Gaoseng zhuan* biography, he was murdered by his patron in 433 when he set out on a trip to the west to obtain the last part of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*. Mengxun's apparent motive was his fear that the wonder-working monk would defect to his rivals, the rising Northern Wei 魏 dynasty.[44]

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[41] See Groner 1990b: 229.

[42] Groner 1990b: 229, 230 n. 20. From the *Yuqie shidi lun*, *T.* 30 (1579) 589c.

[43] Liangzhou 涼州, in present-day Gansu.

[44] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 336b10-19.

Although Dharmakṣema died before northern reunification under the Wei in 439, the style of Buddhism linked with his name was to have continued impact on the character of northern Buddhism in the latter half of the fifth century. His influence was transplanted from Liangzhou across the breadth of China, for when the Northern Wei conquered the Northern Liang in 439, the new empire-builders forced the remaining population to move to their capital in the northeast, Pingcheng 平城.[45]

This northern Buddhism shaped in part by Dharmakṣema and his followers was characterized by emphasis on observance of the precepts; rituals of penance and confession to gain merit, expiate past sins and forestall retribution; the importance of dreams and visions; and the concomitant practices of visualization, recitation of *dhāraṇī*, repetition of the Buddha's name, and circumambulation of images. Episodes in Dharmakṣema's biography illustrate many of these themes and practices, and the translations attributed to him also reflect the tenor of his transmission efforts.

The key aspect of his practice/transmission appears to have been traditional Vinaya under the aegis of Mahāyāna. Dharmakṣema's translation of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* was important in popularizing the notion of a Mahāyāna Vinaya, and three of the other translations attributed to him in the *Gaoseng zhuan* also treat Mahāyāna precepts, the *Pusadichi jing*, the *Pusa jieben*, and the *Youposejie jing*.[46] The last was a bodhisattva precepts text designed specifically for laypersons, as it stipulates the five lay precepts rather than the Vinaya as a prerequisite.[47] Dharmakṣema was clearly promulgating the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* ethos, with its inclusive yet differentiated precepts for clergy and laity.

[45] Present-day Datong 大同 in Shanxi.

[46] On the first two, *T.* 30 (1581) and *T.* 24 (1500), see note 37, above. Regarding the third, the *Youposejie jing* 優婆塞戒經 (*Upāsakaśīla-sūtra*), *T.* 25 (1488), Ono Hōdo says that it is a "Mahāyānization" of the advice for laypersons in the *Sigālaka-sutta* (no. 31 of the *Dīgha-nikāya*). See Ono [1954] 1963: 206; Tokuno 1994: 127 n. 40 & 41.

[47] See Groner 1990b: 227.

A story from his biography regarding his own failure to correctly observe the precepts shows the value placed on traditional Vinaya:

> Dharmakṣema departed for Kashmir carrying the first part of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in ten fascicles, along with the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*, and other works. In that country there were many who studied Hīnayāna and did not believe in the *Nirvāṇa*-[*sūtra*]. So he went east to Kucha and continued on to Guzang, where he stayed at a way-post. He was anxious about losing the sūtras, so he pillowed them [beneath his head] to sleep. Someone tugged at them on the ground, and Dharmakṣema started awake, attributing it to thieves. On the third night of this, he heard a voice from the air saying, "These are the repository of the Tathāgata's teachings of liberation. Why do you pillow them [beneath your head]?" Dharmakṣema was greatly ashamed, and placed them apart in a high place. In the night there *was* someone who [wanted to] steal them, and though he tried and tried to lift [the sūtras], in the end he couldn't do it. The next day, however, Dharmakṣema picked up the sūtras and left as if they were not at all heavy. The thief saw it, and acknowledged that this was a holy man. All came to pay their respects.[48]

Even though the Mahāyāna precepts were theoretically attuned to formless rather than formal transmission and thus to a more flexible cultivation and sanctity, here we observe the tension between formal observance of the precepts and a situation which would seem to call for adaptation. The didactic thrust of the story, however, leaves no doubt as to which course is considered superior. This evocation of disembodied remonstrance for improper handling of the sūtras has much in common with the transmission anxieties of the exegete Daoan, worried over the soteriological implications of faulty translation. Here too we can see soteriological and formal vigilance working in tandem. Adherence to Vinaya ritual served as a prophylactic against the perils of material or linguistic

[48] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 336a11-19.

mishandling, and thus as a guarantee of the continuity and conservation of efficacy of the Dharma. In this case, the Vinaya rules protect the Mahāyāna precepts.

Other anecdotes in Dharmakṣema's biography further illustrate the importance of extraordinary voices and visions as guarantees of continuity and correct transmission/reception. One story in particular is paradigmatic of the increasingly popular notion that the precepts were conveyed by the timeless Buddhas and bodhisattvas, with or without the mediation of a human precepts master.

> Previously, when Dharmakṣema was at Guzang, there was a monk from Zhangye 張掖 named Daojin 道進. He wanted to receive the bodhisattva precepts from Dharmakṣema. Dharmakṣema said, "Repent your transgressions!" [Daojin] did so with the utmost earnestness for seven days and seven nights. On the eighth day he went to see Dharmakṣema, seeking ordination. Dharmakṣema suddenly became terribly angry. Daojin then reflected, "It could only be that my karmic hindrances are not yet dispelled." So he made a concerted effort for three years, meditating and confessing. Then, when Daojin was in samādhi, he saw Śākyamuni Buddha and all the great worthies conferring the precepts upon him. That night he was staying with more than ten other people, and all miraculously dreamed just what Daojin had seen. Daojin wanted to go to Dharmakṣema and tell him. He was still several tens of paces away when Dharmakṣema started to his feet and called out, "Good, good! You have already miraculously [received] the precepts! I will act as witness for you." Then, in front of the image of the Buddha, [Dharmakṣema] explained the characteristics of the precepts for him.[49]

Here the master's transmission of the "characteristics" (*xiang* 相), or verbal and conceptual aspects of the precepts, is ancillary to the disciple's samādhi experience. In the world of northern Buddhist practice of the fifth century, the testimony of visualization

[49] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2059) 336c19-27.

became extremely important both as cause and as sign of purification of karmic residue. In this connection, the testimony of visualization was also an essential gateway to thaumaturgic powers. Adherence to the precepts was the general foundation of the purity that enabled monks such as Dharmakṣema to gain access to supranormal vision and knowledge, and more specifically, the efficacy of dhāraṇī depended upon prior performance of the *uposatha*, the rites of confession and penance.[50]

Dharmakṣema is a stereotypical figure, for in his biography one can see the early and perennial Chinese Buddhist fascination with stories of the monk's ability, by virtue of his virtue, to tap supranormal resources in subduing demons and thieves, and (not dissimilarly) deal with royal patrons. He is also a pivotal figure, for in his biography one can see the bodhisattva precepts, with their emphasis on confession and penance, assume center stage in the drama of virtue rewarded.

Between Dharmakṣema's world and the world of late fifth century Buddhism at Pingcheng there lay the great divides of war, forced displacement, and the persecution of Buddhism by the Northern Wei Emperor Taiwu 太武. Nevertheless, these seeds transplanted from Liangzhou proved hardy and fertile, as we will see in the proliferation of apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts designed for lay practitioners and in stories of karmic resource and recompense featuring lay protagonists. Before focussing on Buddhist culture at Pingcheng, however, there is another general feature of early fifth century practice which merits further attention. This is the cult of the future Buddha Maitreya.

## Maitreya

Maitreya became an significant figure in visualization and bodhisattva precepts practices, a cultic nexus for both lay and ordained. Modern scholars such as Padmanabh

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[50] See, for example, the story of Dharmakṣema subduing demons: *ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2059) 336b8-14.

Jaini suggest that the origins of Maitreya mythology should be sought in a non-Mahāyāna milieu. Jaini analyzed the canonical literature of the pre-Mahāyāna sects for references to Maitreya, and found that the earliest treatments are in the Theravādin *Cakkavattisīhanāda-sutta* in the *Dīghanikāya*, in the *Mahāvastu* of the Mahāsāṅghikas, and in the *Maitreyāvadāna* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins.[51] In the *Mahāvastu* we find pre-Mahāyāna anticipation of the bodhisattva cult, including a list of future Buddhas headed by Maitreya.

The *Mahāvastu* also gives Maitreya the personal name Ajita, and this name suggests certain ambivalent connotations within the Maitreya myth. Stories of Maitreya's former rebirth as the Buddha's novice disciple Ajita were developed largely within the Theravādin tradition. Jaini points out that the Theravādins sanctioned the designation "bodhisattva" only with regard to Maitreya. Because of this, properly identifying him with some canonical person linked to the Buddha presented a singular challenge. Jaini comments, "Who could such a person be who would answer to the name Ajita? The *mahāśrāvakas*, because of their having attained arhatship, were disqualified from receiving the title of bodhisattva. Nor would it have been proper to confer so great an honor on a layman, . . . because monks would then have been obligated to treat a layman deferentially. Given these parameters, the choice of a young novice must have appeared an attractive compromise for the position of bodhisattva."[52]

As the story developed, Ajita was identified as a scion of the family of Ajātasattu, son of King Bimbisāra. Ajātasattu was heir to a dynasty whose rulers were afforded shades of the status of Cakravartin (universal monarch) in early Buddhist literature, but he was also a repentant patricide linked to motifs signalling decline of the Dharma.[53] There are

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[51] Jaini 1988: 54-59.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

various canonical stories involving Ajita-as-Maitreya who receives cloth or a robe intended as a gift to the Buddha from his aunt Mahāprajāpatī, and this theme will reappear in the discussion of the transmission of the robe in the following chapter.

Perhaps due to these traces of his pre-Mahāyāna ancestry, in some major Mahāyāna works Maitreya does not take pride of place among bodhisattvas, in spite of his status as future Buddha. He is subordinate to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in the *Lotus Sūtra* and is cowed by the layman Vimalakīrti in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*.[54] However, Maitreya also has strongly positive roles in these works. The *Lotus Sūtra* has the first canonical reference to devotees being rewarded with rebirth in Tuṣita heaven, where Maitreya resides until being reborn as a Buddha. The bodhisattva Samantabhadra vows to protect those who propagate the *Lotus Sūtra* and to assure their rebirth in Tuṣita. And in spite of Maitreya's inability to answer Vimalakīrti's challenges, in the end the Buddha entrusts him with guardianship and transmission of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*.[55]

The motif of the appeal of Tuṣita is dramatically emphasized in one of the most splendid episodes in Maitreya lore, the meeting between Maitreya and Sudhana in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* section of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*.. Maitreya's power allows the young lay pilgrim to see visions of Maitreya compassionately teaching every conceivable kind and condition of being, visions of the variety of practices of Maitreya and all the Buddhas on the stages of the bodhisattva path, and visions of the splendors of Maitreya's palace in Tuṣita. Sudhana's meeting with Maitreya is however penultimate, for Maitreya sends him back to Mañjuśrī to fulfill his quest.[56]

The interplay between Maitreya and Mañjuśrī as "midwives" of the bodhisattva aspiration would be concretized in the roles assigned to Maitreya and Mañjuśrī in some

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-61; 65-66.

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72; 66.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70. See Cleary, trans., 1993: 1452-1502.

of the fifth century Chinese apocryphal ordination texts. Replacing or super-duplicating the senior monks who officiated in ordinations done according to Vinaya protocol, Śākyamuni was said to function as Upādhyāya (Preceptor), Mañjuśri as Karma-ācārya (Master of karma), and Maitreya as Anuśāsanī-ācārya (Guarantor).

The branch of Mahāyāna with which Maitreya was most closely associated in fifth century China was the Yogācāra school, which had ties to the non-Mahāyāna Sarvāstivāda tradition. One of the seminal texts for the Maitreya cult in China, the *Maitreya-sūtra*, is apparently based on a version of a text preserved in Khotanese, the *Maitreya-samiti*, which in turn drew on the *Maitreyāvadāna* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins mentioned above. Maitreya himself was honored as the coauthor of several philosophical texts of the Yogācāra school. Most notably, Maitreya is credited as the inspirateur of Asaṅga, author of the fourth century *Yogācārabhūmi* that gave birth to the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the source for the Chinese translations of bodhisattva precepts texts discussed above.[57] Saṅgharakṣa, author of the second century non-Mahāyāna *Yogācārabhūmi*, was also a Maitreya devotee.

One might recall the *Yogācārabhūmi* previously discussed in Chapter Two, the so-called *Dhyāna-sūtra* of Dharmatrāta, a.k.a. the *Yogācārabhūmi* of Buddhasena. This *Yogācārabhūmi* is also non-Mahāyāna, stemming from a fourth century branch of the Kashmiri Sarvāstivādin lineage represented by the *Yogācārabhūmi* of Saṅgharakṣa. Demiéville suggests that relations among these various *Yogācārabhūmi*s and their appendices and hybrids reflect the Mahāyāna transition overtaking and partially assimilating Kashmiri Sarvāstivādins in the third century. Traditions about Maitreya in the same era and region also reflect this shift, a straddling of the *śrāvaka* and bodhisattva

[57] It has been argued that Asaṅga may have had a flesh-and-blood teacher named Maitreya, but later Chinese exegetes were taken with the idea of Maitreya as a heavenly master for monks.

vehicles.[58] The notion that it was possible for monks in samādhi to go to Tuṣita and gain instruction or simply to pay respects to Maitreya seems to have developed in this milieu.[59]

Maitreya as consultant figures in a number of stories in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, notably the example cited in the previous chapter, in which Daoan asks for a sign that his exposition of the scriptures is not unsound and receives a dream visit from Maitreya's messenger, the arhat Piṇḍola. Several other stories of monks "having connections" in Tuṣita involve references to the Kashmiri Sarvāstivādin tradition. One of best known of these features the monk Zhiyan 智嚴, disciple of Buddhabhadra's master Buddhasena.

> Zhiyan, long ago before he left home [to become a monk], received the five precepts [for laymen] but was guilty of some lapses. Later when he had entered upon the Way and taken the complete precepts, he had continual misgivings that he had not really obtained the precepts. It was his constant fear. Year after year, he sought insight in meditation, but was unable to satisfy himself. Subsequently, he crossed the ocean to go back once more to India and consult the enlightened sages. He met an arhat monk, laid out the whole matter and asked him about it. The arhat did not dare take it upon himself to decide, so for Zhiyan's sake he entered samādhi and went to the palace in Tuṣita and asked Maitreya. Maitreya responded, "He obtained the precepts." Zhiyan was overjoyed. Immediately he [set off] to return home by foot. He had gotten as far as Kashmir when, with no illness, he died at the age of seventy-eight.[60]

One might surmise that from Kashmir the path to Tuṣita was especially well-

[58] Demiéville 1954: 395-397.

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 377-379. There is also Faxian's account of seeing a statue of Maitreya in the Darel valley in Northern India, where he said there were many Buddhists, all Hīnayānists. He related a legend that the statue had been created by a sculptor who was accompanied by an arhat to Tuṣita three times in order to get a good likeness of Maitreya. *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, *T.* 51 (2085) 858a; see Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 754-755 and 947-948 n. b & 4.

[60] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 339c5-12.

travelled, and thus Zhiyan would have had an easy journey, particularly in light of his prior introduction. This passage plays upon the motif of Maitreya as the monk's arbiter, helpful in matters concerning ordination and exegesis. It also, directly and indirectly, underscores the ease of passage between this world and Tuṣita.

The presence of a cult of Maitreya centered on the aspiration to be reborn in Tuṣita is evident in China from the early fourth century, as attested by paintings and carvings in Buddhist cave sites and inscriptions on statues and stele. As noted in the previous chapter, Daoan's biography refers to his practice of gathering his disciples before an image of Maitreya and vowing collectively to be reborn in Tuṣita, and describes the vision given him before his death which assured realization of his vow. The *Gaoseng zhuan* account of the death of Daoan's disciple Fayu 法遇 also alludes to this collective vow, to which Fayu remains faithful even though his own disciple wonders why he does not appeal to Amitābha instead. Tsukamoto Zenryū notes that this may be taken as an early sign of the eventual eclipse of Tuṣita by Amitābha's Sukhāvati in the seventh century.[61]

Huiyuan's "White Lotus Society" (Bailian she 白蓮社) was probably influenced by the cult of his master Daoan, but it was a cult of Amitābha, not Maitreya. This society has been much studied by Japanese scholars, who debate its influence on later Jingtu 淨土 (Pure Land)-oriented practices. As described in Huiyuan's biography, it originated with a collective ceremony at Mt. Lu in 402. Those in the assembly, one hundred and twenty-three monks and educated laymen, took a vow to help each other to practice *śīla* and samādhi and attain rebirth in Sukhāvati. Huiyuan particularly stressed the practice of Buddha-recollection meditation (*Buddhānusmṛtisamādhi*), which was to enable the practitioner to view Amitābha directly and obtain guidance. Tsukamoto points out that this was not simply a cult of rebirth in paradise but was primarily a vow to enable the

[61] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2059) 356c; Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 753.

community to realize access to Amitābha's teaching in the present. Given the context of Huan Xuan's hammering at the Eastern Jin and his threats to select the clergy, Tsukamoto notes the likelihood of both escapist and "self-help" motivations in the collective vow at Mt. Lu.[62]

Another important feature of the White Lotus Society was due to the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma scholar Saṅghadeva's influence. His arrival at Mt. Lu in 392 caused the community to become more aware of the doctrine of karmic retribution, and the teaching that cultivation of *śīla*, samādhi, and *prajñā* enabled one to transcend the effects of previous karma.[63] Here we see an early example of a mixed lay and ordained community collectively taking the doctrine of karmic retribution, a "theodicy of good (and bad) fortune," as one of the main foundations of practice.

The community's practice was much influenced by the so-called *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*, a popular visualization sūtra related to the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures that was said to have been translated by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖.[64] In the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla* it is claimed that vision of the Buddha is not gained through supranormal powers nor after death but as a result of Amitābha's *adhiṣṭhāna*, his power of accumulated merit or grace. The practitioner hears and accepts the Dharma from Amitābha directly and then emerges from samādhi to tell others about it. A passage in the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla* likens the experience of visiting various Buddhas to visiting harlots in a dream, and remaining enamored of them after waking.

> It is as if there is a man who hears that in the land Vaiśālī there is a harlot named Sumanā, or another who hears that there is one named Āmrapāli,

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[62] Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 844-847.

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 847-850.

[64] *Banzhousanmei jing* 般舟三昧經 (*Pratyutpannabuddhasammukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*), *T*. 13 (417).

or yet another who hears that there is one named Upapannā. At the time, each of them thinks of one. Although they have never seen them, the mere hearing of them agitates their desires. In a dream, each calls on one of them. At the time, all three men are in Rājagṛha, but at the same time, by thinking, each goes in a dream to the respective harlot's place, where he lives with her. Once awake, each thinks of his own.[65]

The *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla* seems to have been for Huiyuan and his community a source of much inspiration mixed with some unease. One of Huiyuan's questions to Kumārajīva in their celebrated exchange of letters addresses doubts raised by the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*'s frequent use of the analogy between dream and vision of the Buddhas. Huiyuan poses a number of excellent questions and objections interspersed with theoretical responses from the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*. The passage is very long, so I will summarize. Huiyuan begins by saying that if the Buddhas seen through the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*'s practice of *Buddhānusmṛtisamādhi* are like dreams, then they are subjective illusions. If they are really external responses, then they are not like dreams. Even if one sees visions as the result of supranormal powers, such visions are not absolute truth and are not the intended purpose of samādhi, so how can they lead to understanding? The *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla* stipulates three conditions for attaining samādhi: maintaining the precepts, doing meritorious deeds, and the grace of the Buddha (*fo weishen* 佛威神). Huiyuan objects that even if the Buddhas are seen in samādhi, how one can really know whether they are based in subjective conception or not? And if the Buddhas are experienced outside of samādhi, then they are indeed dream apparitions. The experience is not merely interior, and it can't be the same as dreams. Is the Dharma of the *Buddhānusmṛtisamādhi* Dharma as such, or not?[66]

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[65] Hurvitz, trans., in Tsukamoto [1979] 1985: 851.

[66] *Dasheng dayizhang* 大乘大義章, *T.* 45 (1856) 134b 5-21. Kumārajīva's reply is from 134b22-135a11. Kumārajīva's response is rather technical, but he admits that these are difficult questions. For a

Huiyuan astutely presents the problems posed by opening the Dharma gates wide to all comers, "each thinking of his own." If precepts and acts of merit were to be subsumed into and in effect subordinated to samādhi experiences of the Buddha's teaching, then the meaning of Dharma transmission would change utterly. One might add that like a "harlot's place" such Buddha-Dharma might tend to be more frequented by men with the leisure to cultivate samādhi but perhaps not the stamina to pursue a full monastic course of training.

The *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla* clearly validated lay practice, for it prescribes the same procedure for monks and nuns, lay men and women, who seek the vision of Amitābha. It was also apparently the basis for a non-extant treatise by Huiyuan on the practice of samādhi while remaining "in the family."[67] In contrast to later lay societies of the Northern Wei, however, the lay members of Huiyuan's community were all educated men of leisure. Furthermore, the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*'s interpretation of the five precepts for "lay bodhisattvas" could hardly be considered compatible with family life:

> The Buddha declared to Bhadrapāla, "A white-robed bodhisattva who, [cultivating the Path at home and] having heard of this samādhi, wishes to learn and to keep it, is to keep to the Five Prohibitions, purely and firmly dwelling within them. . . . He cannot have affection for wife and children, he cannot take thought for sons or daughters, he cannot take thought for goods or chattels. His constant thought is of the wish to reject wife and children, in his behavior to become a *śramaṇa*, ever to keep the Eightfold Fast, and that always in a Buddhist monastery.[68]

This is a rather different ideal than that of the most famous "white-robed bodhisattva"

general discussion of the letters and a brief description of all of Huiyuan's questions, see Zürcher 1959: 226-229.

[67] Zürcher 1959: 220.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 855.

Vimalakīrti, who reconciles in himself the householder's and renunciant's life, and teaches the Dharma to gamblers and prostitutes. Yet for the average practitioner, rejection of wife and children was undoubtedly a more accessible practice than besting arhats and bodhisattvas in wisdom and compassion.

In any case, let us return to Maitreya. Although Huiyuan's society was based on visualization of Amitābha one does not have to leave Mt. Lu to pick up the threads of Maitreya visualization once again. As discussed in the previous chapter, Buddhbhadra, heir to the Sarvāstivāda Maitreya visualization tradition, also spent time at Mt. Lu. After leaving Mt. Lu Buddhabhadra took up residence in the southern capital under the patronage of officials serving the ascendant general Liu Yu. There Buddhabhadra translated another Buddha-recollection scripture, the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* 觀佛三昧海經 (Sūtra on the Sea of the Samādhi of Buddha Visualization).[69] Like the *Sūtra of Bhadrapāla*, the *Guanfo sanmei hai jing* also extolled visualization of the characteristics of the Buddha and included tales of karmic retribution, but in this case the practitioner was assured a vision of Maitreya and rebirth in Tuṣita.

An episode in the biography of Buddhabhadra further highlights his connection with Tuṣita, for he appears to his fellow-monk Saṅghadatta 僧伽達多 whilst the latter is in samādhi in a closed cell, tells him that he had just been to Tuṣita to see Maitreya, and then vanishes, leaving Saṅghadatta hugely impressed.[70] Miyaji Akira, in his study on the iconography of the Buddhist caves at Kizil, notes connections between the meditation cell, scenes of Tuṣita heaven, and mountain scenes with meditating monks, pointing to a natural homology between the sites and sights of visualization practice.[71] The

[69] *T.* 15 (643)

[70] *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 334c 7-11.

[71] Miyaji 1989: 45–48. I am very grateful to Hank Glassman for showing me his translation of this fascinating article.

meditation-mountain-Tuṣita motif also recalls the legend of the Buddha's disciple Mahākāśyapa sitting in samādhi in Mt. Kukkuṭapāda, awaiting the advent of Maitreya so as to convey Śākyamuni's robe to him. We will return to this legend in the next chapter.

The instantaneousness of rebirth in Tuṣita was another important feature of the cult, stressed in the *Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經 (Scripture of the Visualization of Maitreya's Ascension to Tuṣita).[72] Rebirth is said to take place in the instant it takes to bend and stretch the arms, or snap the fingers, reminiscent of the gestures Buddha and Yaśas use to illustrate the instantaneousness of the sudden teaching to Huiyuan in the *Lidai fabao ji*.[73] In the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, the instantaneous panoptic vision of the bodhisattva path and Tuṣita heaven serves simultaneously as recapitulation and realization of the path upon which Sudhana embarks with his vows, both concluding and initiating the cycle of innumerable lifetimes as a bodhisattva. Likewise, for the aspirant to the assurance of Tuṣita heaven, the metonymy between visualization (individually achieved) and vision (given by the power of Maitreya) functioned as an im-mediate fulfillment, the assurance of an instantaneous/future/irrevocable rebirth as a Buddha.

The interplay between work and grace became in time more explicit, and more problematic. Tuṣita's proximity, its location in our own *kāmadhātu* realm of desire rather than in the realms of form or formlessness, was said to make it more accessible to the laity than Buddha-lands in other realms; moreover, as we have seen, both Hīnayānists and Mahāyānists had connections there. However, later Pure Land sectarians were to argue that Maitreya was only accessible for meditation adepts whereas utter faith in Amitābha won what arduous practice could not. This distinction was to become a prime tenet of the Japanese Pure Land school, articulated as the irreconcilable difference

[72] *T.* 14 (452)

[73] *Ibid.*, *T.* 14 (452) 420a-b.

between self-power (*jiriki* 自力) and other-power (*tariki* 他力), and the absolute superiority of the latter.

In fifth-century Buddhist cultures of the north, the practice of visualization of Buddha-lands did not have the territorial implications that it was to assume in later centuries. One might say that visualizers were pilgrims like Sudhana, and a vision was efficacious whether the vista was Amitābha in Sukhāvati or Maitreya in Tuṣita. By the seventh century sectarian division had overtaken the Maitreya and Amitābha cults, but in the fifth and early sixth centuries the two were most often considered complementary or supplementary. This can be seen in the caves of Kizil, Dunhuang and Yungang, where the paradises of Amitābha and Maitreya adorn opposite walls of the same cave and individual paradise scenes are sometimes impossible to identify as one or the other. It is telling that in 511, the donor of a statue of Maitreya inscribed a wish that his mother be reborn in Sukhāvati.[74]

In the Northern Wei, to which we will now turn, several aspects of the Maitreya cult outlined above become particularly significant. Devotional practices including visualization, dedication of offerings, and vows to be reborn in Tuṣita gained currency among clergy and laity alike, closely linked to widespread interest in theories and stories of karmic retribution. Against this background, the bodhisattva precepts came to play an increasingly important role.

The Northern Wei Dynasty

In speaking of the Northern Wei, the vexed question of the biases of one's sources (not to mention one's own) becomes especially acute. For materials on Chinese biographies of monks and translations of texts thus far, we have been largely indebted to Sengyou's *Chusanzang ji ji* and Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan*, both written in the first half of

[74] Demiéville 1954: 394 n. 7.

the sixth century in the capital of the southern Liang 梁 dynasty (502-557). The relationship between Sengyou's and Huijiao's circumstances and their work has been studied elsewhere; suffice it to say that the north-south divide did play a role in their presentation of material, and they have bequeathed to later scholars a sense of dichotomy between the doctrinal sophistication of southern monks versus the rigorous ascesis of northern monks, along with a certain distaste for the extremes of the latter.[75]

The dramatic circumstances of the rise and fall of the Northern Wei has made it the paradigmatic northern dynasty of the period. As with Tang historians' fascination with the lessons of Fujian's hubristic earnestness and the fall of the Qin discussed in the previous chapter, the Northern Wei likewise provided much material for the didactic biography of a dynasty. However, while Buddhism in the form of Daoan played a small ancillary role in the drama of the Qin, the postmortem chroniclers of the Northern Wei explicitly linked its fate with the vicissitudes of its Buddhism. This attitude is most noticeable in Wei Shou's 魏收 *Shilao zhi* 釋老志 (Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism)[76] written in the early part of the Northern Qi 北齊 (550-577) and Yang Xuanzhi's 楊衒之 *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 (A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang)[77] completed in 547.

The Buddhist section of Wei Shou's chronological *Shilao zhi*, besides being an invaluable resource, is also a compelling testament to its author's sense of the fateful abuse of the Three Jewels by clergy and laity alike. Wei Shou begins by recounting the story of Buddhism's introduction to China, including familiar protagonists such as Emperor Ming of the Han, and skillfully weaves lucid (if occasionally inaccurate)

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75 See Wright [1954] 1993: 73-111; Link 1960; Makita 1973 & 1975; Shinohara 1994.

76 Fascicle 114 of the *Wei shu* 魏書 (Wei History), Zhonghua shuju ed., 1974: 3025-3062. For an English translation of the Buddhist section and the Japanese annotations of Tsukamoto Zenryū, see Hurvitz, trans., 1956.

77 *T.* 51 (2092); Wang Yi-t'ung, trans., 1984.

explanations of Buddhist history and doctrine into his narrative. Then, following praise for Daoan's and Kumārajīva's dissemination of the Dharma throughout the Chinese heartland, Wei Shou introduces the Wei forebears with muted but portentous contrast:

> When the ancestors of the Wei established their kingdom in the bleak North, their customs were simple, and without any ado they kept themselves. From the Western Regions they were cut off, and there was not coming and going between them. Therefore they had not yet heard of the doctrine of the Buddha, or, if they had heard of it, they did not yet believe in it.[78]

From these beginnings, the Wei armies under Tuoba Gui 拓跋珪, posthumously known as the founding emperor Taizu 太祖,[79] rolled through present-day Shanxi and Hebei during the latter part of the fourth century. Wei Shou notes that at first the Wei founder merely reciprocated signs of respect shown towards him by the clergy of the conquered territories. However, the reputation of the monk Faguo 法果 caught Taizu's attention, and he was invited to the Wei court and honored. The succeeding emperor also heaped titles and favors upon him. In contrast to the debates over secular versus clerical authority which were taking place nearly contemporaneously in the south between Huiyuan and Huan Xuan, Faguo capitulated to (and in effect appropriated) the office of the emperor as the progenitor of Buddhist authority, thereby removing the basis of conflict:

> Fa-kuo had always used to say, "T'ai-tsu is enlightened and loves the Way. He is in his very person the Thus-Having-Come-One (Tathāgatha). *Śramaṇas* must and should pay him all homage." Then he would always do obeisance. Fa-kuo would say to the others, "He who propagates the

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[78] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 50. The *Tuoba* 拓跋 (Tabghatch) people were from the northeast of present-day Shanxi. For a linguistic analysis of their origins, see Boodberg [1936] 1979: 221-239.

[79] Reigned 336-409, enthroned as emperor of the Wei in 398. See Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 51.

teaching of the Buddha is the lord of men. I am not doing obeisance to the Emperor, I am merely worshipping the Buddha."[80]

Cordial relations between court and clergy lasted until late in the reign of the third Wei emperor, Taiwu 太武 (r. 424-452). Wei Shou portrays Taiwu as coming under the influence of the Daoist master Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 and a fervently anti-Buddhist minister, Cui Hao 崔浩 (381-450). At the instigation of Cui Hao, in 444 Xuangao 玄高 (402-444) and Huichong 慧崇, the two most prominent monks of the court at Pingcheng, were executed.[81] Both monks were originally from Liangzhou, and it has been suggested that resentment of the undue influence of the Liangzhou conscripts and their Buddhism played a role in the ensuing persecution.

Upon a dubious pretext, Cui Hao incited the emperor to issue edicts ordering execution of all monks and anyone who attempted to hide or aid them, as well as ordering the destruction of Buddhist temples and images.[82] According to Wei Shou's version the edict was promulgated in 446, but Tsukamoto notes that according to the imperial chronicles section of the *Wei shu* it was actually issued in 444 when the two monks were executed.[83] If we accept the earlier date, then this first violent persecution of Buddhism in China lasted eight years, from 444-452. Wei Shou notes that towards the end the measures were not very strictly enforced, but in the beginning even the Daoist Kou Qianzhi was said to have protested the campaign's harshness.[84]

Wei Shou quotes a second imperial edict issued in 446 defending the persecution, an

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[81] *Gaoseng zhuan* biography of Xuangao, *T.* 50 (2059) 397a3-398b11; see also Tang [1938] 1991: 490-496.

[82] The pretext for persecution was the supposed discovery of concealed weapons and evidence of wine and debauchery in a Changan monastery. Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 64-65.

[83] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 64-66.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 69. On Kou Qianzhi's protest, see Tsukamoto 1957: 365.

edict replete with Sinified execration of Buddhism as a barbarian affront that has resulted in Heaven's punishment.[85] One wonders to what extent the emperor's advisors responsible for drafting the persecution edicts were affected by the earlier debates in the south, for the second edict criticizes Buddhist monks' disregard for the "law of Kings." Yet, as noted, the leading Wei cleric Faguo had made a point of paying homage to the emperor *qua* Buddha, an indication that northern monks had not felt it expedient to flout Wei imperial authority directly.

Judging from the seriousness of the persecution, fear and resentment of the clergy were probably not confined to the two men upon whom later historians laid most of the responsibility. Antipathy towards Buddhism was one current of thought among Confucian intellectuals of the south, and this perhaps had some influence, but it is clear that there was also ample scope for home-grown conflict between Buddhists and Daoists of the multi-ethnic factions of the Wei polity. It is also possible that the extent of the persecution was exaggerated by later Buddhist chroniclers in order to dramatize the ensuing reversal of fortunes.

The deepest impression of the persecution was the swiftness and completeness with which punishment fell upon the persecutors. Kou Qianzhi died two years after the persecution began, having predicted the demise of his erstwhile collaborator, Cui Hao. In 450, Cui Hao incurred the emperor's wrath and was tortured and executed, and all his clan and retainers were also put to death. The following year the Crown Prince Huang 晃 , who had tried to defend the Buddhists, was estranged from the emperor due to slander and died of grief. The emperor himself was assassinated in 452 by the same clique of eunuchs that had caused him to lose his son.[86] Although the succeeding emperor Wencheng 文成 (r. 452-465) issued an edict that portrayed his grandfather as having

[85] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 67.

[86] Tsukamoto 1957: 354-65.

been misled and misunderstood, it is clear that Emperor Taiwu's misfortunes and death were considered to be the result of grave sins, implicated in the same fate that had befallen Cui Hao.[87]

After the persecution there was determined effort to recast all the Wei emperors including Taiwu not only as Buddhist patrons but as Buddhist authorities -- and even as Buddhas. Wei Shou notes that Emperor Wencheng gave the tonsure to the first five monks who came forward to be reinstated after the persecution: "For [Shixian] and his fellows, five men in all, the Emperor personally shaved off the hair."[88] The emperor's gesture approaches the intimacy of a personal attendant or fellow monk, and at the same time assumes the authority of an ordination master. Shixian 師賢 (d. *ca.* 460), the leading monk who was so honored was at that time given the office of "Superintendent of Those of the Way" (*daoren tong* 道人統), a post originally created for Faguo who had taught that the emperors were "living Buddhas."

There are two key passages in the *Shilao zhi* that indicate somewhat circumspect imperial support for the notion of the emperors as living Buddhas. An imperial edict of 452 ordered that a stone image, not specifically identified as Buddhist, be made in the likeness of the emperor. Wei Shou states: "When it was finished, on both the face and the soles of the feet were black pebbles, which mysteriously resembled moles on the upper and lower parts of the Emperor's body. Those who discussed this thought that it was in response to his purity and sincerity."[89] In 454, an imperial edict decreed the casting of five huge copper statues of Śākyamuni for the sake of Taizu and the four subsequent emperors. Tsukamoto comments that "The Buddhas may have been meant as votive offerings for the repose of the souls of the five Emperors, but actually the hall

[87] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 70.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[89] *Ibid.*

where they were worshipped was a shrine of these past monarchs."[90]

Through the latter half of the fifth century Buddhism served the state well as a unifying force. The aftermath of the persecution saw a great ground-swell in the popularity of Buddhism, encompassing all levels of society and diverse ethnic groups. This is attested by Wei Shou and later chroniclers, by the proliferation of indigenous scriptures, including a number of bodhisattva precepts texts, by the numerous Northern Wei Buddhist stele and images, and by the awe-inspiring cave-temples at Yungang.

The monk Tanyao 曇曜 (d. *ca*. 485), who was perhaps a disciple of the executed eminent monk Xuangao, has been especially associated with the post-persecution Buddhist revival. He was appointed to the leading clerical office (renamed "Śramaṇa Superintendent," *shamen tong* 沙門統) after Shixian's death, and in this capacity he persuaded the emperor to institute a kind of joint venture between the government and the Saṅgha:

> T'an-yao petitioned that the households of P'ing-ch'i 平齊 and those of the people who could yearly convey sixty "hu" of grain and present them to the clerical officials constitute Saṃgha-households, and their grain be designated Saṃgha-grain, to be used in lean years to relieve the famine-stricken people. He also requested that those of the people who committed grave crimes, as well as the public slaves, be constituted Buddha-households, to serve the temples as sweepers and sprinklers, and also manage the fields and transport the grain. Kao-tsung 高宗 granted all these requests. Thereafter Saṃgha-households and Saṃgha-grain and temple-households were to be found everywhere in the prefectures and garrisons.[91]

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[90] Tsukamoto 1957: 374.

[91] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 73. Tsukamoto has a note to the effect that Gaozong, the posthumous title of Emperor Wencheng (r. 452-465) should be changed to Gaozu, the posthumous title of Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471-498). However, since so far Wei Shou has been discussing Gaozong, and in the next passage notes the accession of Xianzu (r. 465-471), I have decided to retain the name in Wei Shou's text.

Tanyao also urged the emperor to undertake the building of the cave temples at Yungang, and he oversaw the construction. The caves of Yungang are testimony to a new level of the melding of state cult and popular Buddhism. The prevalence of the figures of Śākyamuni and Maitreya at Yungang suggest the weight given to representations of authority and continuity. At the same time, recalling Victor Hugo's paean to Notre-Dame as at once scripture, theater, and carnival for medieval Paris, the caves of Yungang offer instruction and entertainment for educated and illiterate alike. Gauging from my own (at the time) wordless response to these caves, I can only imagine the fifth century effect of the magnificent encircling episodes of Śākyamuni's life, the multi-story paradises, and the towering yet benevolent Tathāgata-rulers. Connections between iconography and practice at the caves of Dunhuang and Yungang are the subject of a growing body of scholarly literature, which is beyond the scope of this study to present.[92]

One can surmise, however, that rituals of repentance and lay ordination must have played a part in the practices centered upon these caves and upon the city temples of Pingcheng, and later, Luoyang. As seen already from traces of Buddhism in Liangzhou, visualization practice and Buddhist images were intimately linked with the practices of repentance and ordination. These already flourishing practices were given added impetus by the post-persecution mood of pious awe.

After the persecution the Northern Wei continued to absorb some new territories by conquest, encroaching on its main rival the southern Liu Song dynasty. However, the pace of military expansion slowed, and state-building energies merged ever more powerfully with the energies of the Buddhist clergy and lay believers. The massive project at Yungang bears witness to the expansion of the state cult at Pingcheng, but the Saṅgha- and Buddha-households instituted by Tanyao and Emperor Wencheng were also

[92] See Soper 1959; Sato 1978; Caswell 1988; Abe 1990; Fraser 1996.

a key component of imperial policy to expand its viable agricultural base. New lands were cultivated in the north, sometimes with labor from criminals forged into Buddha-households, and older agricultural areas needed resettlement after the ravages of years of warfare. Famines were a recurrent problem in the decades following the persecution. Due to the grain repositories gathered for collective famine relief from the Saṅgha-households, Buddhist monasteries could provide resources for further Saṅgha-households formed to cultivate new lands. Once such a Saṅgha-household had contributed the required annual levy of grain its lands were otherwise tax-free. As policy it was an apparently virtuous cycle, but in practice the potential for abuse of the system began to manifest early.[93]

In 472, Wei Shou records an edict prohibiting unregistered monks, which also remonstrated against wasting capital on Buddhist works. The edict complains about harm to insects, but harm to state resources was probably more to the point:

> Men in both the interior and outlying areas are raising up meritorious works and erecting reliquaries and temples. High and wide, extensive and imposing, they are also adequate to propagating and exalting the Ultimate Doctrine. And yet the ignorant outdo one another, and the poor and rich vie with one another. They exhaust their property, striving only for magnificence, but they harm and kill insects and other life-containing beings. If one has a pure and pious mind, even though engaged in heaping earth and gathering sand, one's accumulated merit shall not perish.[94]

The popularity of dedicating durable monuments, often inscribed with collective vows to be reborn in a Pure Land, is attested by works ranging from single images commissioned by an entire village to the huge imperial projects. The contributors to this

[93] Chen 1964: 154-158. On the latter half of the Northern Wei, see also Tsukamoto [1942] 1974 and Jorgensen 1979: 17-44.

[94] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 77.

Buddhist state of things were gaining merit, but excesses began to overburden the economic system even before the capital was moved from Pingcheng to Luoyang. The autonomy provided by clerical status was to be a recurring economic problem throughout Chinese Buddhist history, but the close ties between Buddhist and state apparatus in the Northern Wei rendered it particularly vulnerable. For example, the induction of criminals into Buddha-households reduced the responsibilities of the state, but also reduced central control over lawless elements. The state turned the responsibility for famine relief over to the Saṅgha, but thereby reduced its tax revenues. As these foundations gradually weakened the resources diverted into the construction of monuments increased, overburdening the architecture of the entire polity.

Only a few years after the above edict advocating restriction of the clergy and restraint in spending on Buddhist works, the Imperial household is on record as giving little heed to its own admonitions. Following the death in 476 of the abdicated emperor Xianzu 顯祖 (Emperor Xianwen 獻文, r. 465-471), there were a plethora of Buddhist ceremonies and works dedicated to his memory:

> In the first year of Ch'eng-ming, in the eighth month, Kao-tsu 高祖[95] held a great religious offering at the Yung-ning-ssu 永寧寺. The men and women of good family who were ordained then and became monks and nuns numbered more than one hundred. The Emperor shaved their hair and presented them with clerical robes, that the conduct and precepts observed by them might confer merit upon Hsien-tsu. In that month he also order the building of the Chien-ming-ssu 建明寺.[96]

Tsukamoto speculates that the Empress Dowager may have had something to do with Emperor Xianwen's death, and so these efforts may be seen to reflect a guilty conscience

[95] Emperor Xiaowen 孝文, r. 471-499.

[96] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 78.

or a desire to appease a potentially angry spirit.[97] Presumably, many on the lower end of the social scale would have had equally compelling reasons to ignore imperial recommendations about the virtues of thrift.

Wei Shou continues to chronicle the oscillation between reverence and regulation in the records of the state's attitude towards the Saṅgha. The year 493 saw two significant events, the promulgation of a Clerical Code (*sengzhi* 僧制) in forty-seven articles, and the removal of the capital to Luoyang.[98] The latter event seems to have had much more impact on the Saṅgha than the former. Shifting the capital was undertaken for political and symbolic reasons by the sinophile Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471-499), and it ushered in a "golden age" for Buddhism.

Noted previously as one of the key sources for the Northern Wei, Yang Xuanzhi's 楊衒之 *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 (A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang) captures the glory and the brevity of its golden age. Evoking the history of Buddhism in the eastern capital through references to Emperor Ming's pious works and to the temples of the Jin dynasty, Yang Xuanzhi then recalls the contrast between the heyday of Northern Wei Buddhism and its aftermath:

> Princes, dukes, and ranking officials donated such valuable things as elephants and horses, as generously as if they were slipping shoes from off their feet. The people and the wealthy families parted with their treasures as easily as with forgotten rubbish. As a result, Buddhist temples were built side by side, and stūpas rose up in row after row. . . . Golden stūpas matched the imperial observatory in height, and Buddhist lecture halls were as magnificent as the [ostentatiously wasteful] O-pang 阿房 [Palaces of the Ch'in dynasty (221-207 B.C.)].
>
> During the troubled years of the Yung-hsi period 永熙 (Always Joyful)

[97] Tsukamoto 1957: 383-396.

[98] *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

(A.D. 532-534), the emperor moved to Yeh 鄴, accompanied by monks of various temples. It was not until . . . (A.D. 547) that I revisited Loyang while on official duty. The outer and inner city walls lay in ruins, palaces were toppled, temples and monasteries were in ashes, and stūpas were no more than deserted graves. Walls were covered with wild vines, and streets were dotted with thorny bushes. Wild beasts lived under deserted stairways, and mountain birds bode in the trees of abandoned courtyards. . . . Within and without the capital city there had been more than one thousand temples. Today they are mostly demolished; one cannot hear the tolling of bells at all.[99]

There was apparently something of a boom-town atmosphere at Luoyang for a brief period. The shift to Luoyang brought with it more conscious appropriation of Han culture and administrative norms, and, building on ancient ruins of a Chinese imperial city, the new aristocracy sought signs of their legitimacy. The *Luoyang qielan ji* is full of stories of discoveries of Buddhist statues and other remnants of the old city. At the same time as the newly-Sinified were trying to connect with the Chinese past, Buddhism represented a tradition old enough to rival the Chinese layers of history, and powerful enough to pacify the ghosts disturbed and to force them, or bribe them with merit, to sanction the new inheritors.

Buddhism also served as it had earlier at Pingcheng, as a unifying creed amidst the disparate peoples and regional cultures gathered in the capital. Luoyang, the greatest northern Buddhist center and the eastern terminus of the Silk Route, absorbed the full impact of the "second wave" of Mahāyāna, the latest trends in Yogācāra philosophy, which made their way south only gradually. The court sponsored new Yogācāra translations, Bodhiruci's lectures, and the sūtra-seeking Indian mission of Song Yun 宋雲

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[99] *Luoyang qielan ji*, Wang, trans., 1984: 5-7.

and the monk Huisheng 惠生.[100]

Yet disaffection multiplied along with the temples. The last part of Wei Shou's *Shilao zhi* becomes a record of edicts and memorials cast like twigs into the path of a flood of clerical abuses. One such memorial states:

> Yet the Wei-na General Sêng-hsien 僧暹 and Sêng-p'in 僧頻 on the one hand violate an established decree, on the other turn their backs on the clerical laws. Selfish in thought, reckless in feeling, they memorialize for compulsory services, causing crying anguish to fill the roadways. Those who have abandoned their children, killed, strangled themselves, and drowned are more than fifty persons. Is this what is meant by honoring saintly wisdom and merciful guidance? Nay, it profoundly misses Your Majesty's intent in taking the Refuges.[101]

One might surmise that the outrage was all the sharper because more was expected of the Saṅgha-overlords than of the usual worldly kind. As Peter Brown says of the holy man as patron in eastern Mediterranean societies of the fourth and fifth centuries:

> The position of the holy men in Syria is a paradigm of the need of eastern Christians to consider as 'holy' ascetic figures on whom they could place their hopes for a 'holy', that is for an idealized, patronage, in a world overshadowed by the 'unholy', that is, by an only too real, patronage. This aspect of East Roman social and spiritual life is well summed up by Thomas Hobbes in chapter ten of his *Leviathan*: 'Reputation of power is power: because it draweth with it the adherence of those who need protection.'

Brown also asks how "East Romans framed their expectations of the holy, and how they combined these in such a way not only to facilitate the exercise of 'reputation of

[100] *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 215-246.

[101] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 87.

power' but, tacitly, to delimit this same exercise."[102] Brown delicately and vividly evokes Late Antique expectations of the holy in this and other of his works, but one of his main theses is that the delimitation of the holy was calibrated to the contrasts between the desert and village, and in turn between village and town. The holy man was seen to derive his powers from his ability to live the antithesis of human life in the desert, or to move among the people but remain marked as an outsider. "The holy, therefore, was at its most holy when least connected with that conflict of human interests which it was constantly called upon to palliate."[103]

Stories such as the following *Luoyang qielan ji* tale of the consignment of lecturers and monastic officials to Hell indicates very similar calibration and delimitation at work. In memorials and stories attempting the separation of false and true clergy one can discern a high level of skepticism and resentment towards worldly monastics, but one can also discern the persistence of high expectations. The cloud of mystery that had once set apart all of the ordained began to recede to the lonelier peaks of spiritual athleticism.

The *Luoyang qielan ji* tale is purported to be the observations of the monk Huining 惠凝 (a.k.a. Huiyi 慧嶷), who came back to life after being dead for seven days and related how Yama, King and Judge of the Dead, had dealt with various newly-arrived monks. According to Huiyi two monks, an ascetic meditator and a reciter of the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, were instantly allowed to ascend to paradise. The others did not fare so well: an important lecturer was called arrogant and was led away to a dark and unpleasant place, and a fund-raising enthusiast for scriptures and images was called avaricious and suffered the same fate. Finally, a ranking official turned monk came up for judgement:

Still another monk, who called himself Pao-chen 寶真 of the Ling-chüeh

[102] Brown [1976] 1982: 181.

[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

Monastery 靈覺寺 (Monastery of Spiritual Awakening) said of himself that he had been the Grand Warden of Lung-hsi 隴西 before leaving home to become a monk. As the Grand Warden, he financed the construction of the Ling-chüeh Monastery, and, upon its completion, he abandoned his official post and became a monk. Although he did not meditate or chant sūtras, he had never been negligent in religious worship. Yama said: "As Grand Warden, you impaired justice, twisted the law, and robbed people's properties. Even if you claim to have built the temple, it was not due to your efforts [because the expenses are from others]. So it is senseless for you to talk about it!" Entrusted to the official in charge, he too was led into the black gate by a person dressed in blue.[104]

The "return from death" was a device often used in Chinese didactic tales of the uncanny. The premise of this tale recalls Erasmus' *Iulius exclusus* of 1512, in which the Pope Julius is denied entry to Heaven by Saint Peter, but the *Luoyang qielan ji* account was neither so funny nor so distasteful to those in power. Yang Xuanzhi records that Huining's story resulted in an official change of policy whereby greater imperial favor was awarded to meditators.[105] The message is reinforced in other stories demonstrating that true merit is gained through dedicated simple practice, not expensive projects.

Increasingly frequent rebellions throughout the second decade of the sixth century were fueled in part by resentment towards the "altar rats of the Law" who grew fat on Saṅgha-grain.[106] One particularly violent episode was the so-called Mahāyāna rebellion of 515 whose leader Faqing 法慶, fashioning his ideology from scraps of Buddhist doctrine, fomented an eschatological mission to slaughter the clergy and other "devils."[107]

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[104] *Luoyang qielan ji*, Wang, trans., 1984: 75.

[105] *Ibid*., pp. 75-76.

[106] A complaint about clerical excesses from a memorial included in the *Shilao zhi*, see Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 96.

[107] Jorgensen 1979: 25-26. Faqing asserted that murder of enemies caused his followers to progress

The Empress Dowager Ling 靈太后 was an ardent supporter of Buddhism and the founding patroness of the magnificent Yongning 永寧 Monastery constructed in 516. She apparently felt, however, that the wrong element was threatening to ruin the tone of the religion, for in the following year she promulgated a decree limiting the clergy and prohibiting "private ordination" (*sidu* 私度).

> Every year the ordination of monks shall have a limit. . . . The provincial Comptroller of Śramaṇas and Wei-na as well as the secular officials shall make a careful examination and choice and fill the number. If there are none of strict conduct, they may not choose at random. If they choose a wrong person, they shall, beginning with the governor, be considered to have violated an Imperial edict. . . . Privately ordained monks are the responsibility of the three chiefs, but, since the guilt has not touched them personally, they have tolerated many hidden offenses. From now on, if there be one person privately ordained, all concerned shall be considered to have disobeyed an Imperial edict. . . . The person privately ordained shall be assigned to hard labor in his respective province.[108]

The decree specifically objected to monks and nuns who ordained slaves as their disciples, thereby raising the social degree of their personal attendants. When one reads of the description of Yongning Monastery in the *Luoyang qielan ji*, one understands that the clergy lived there in splendor competing with that of the palaces of the aristocracy, and in fact towering over them. Seeking merit, the Wei aristocracy raised the clergy to levels of political and economic power rivaling their own, and then attempted to control admission to the eminence that they had created. Imperial decrees limited ordination for some of the same reasons that the emperor and empress denied the lay public access to the lofty stūpa of the monastery which afforded a view into their own palaces: "After the

through the stages of the bodhisattva path.

[108] Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 90.

ornamentation was finished, Emperor Ming 明 (regnant A.D. 515-528) and the Empress Dowager [Hu] both ascended [the tower]. They viewed the palaces [as if] in their own palms, and gazed down upon the national capital [as if] in their own courtyard. To keep the interior of the palaces from public view, people were denied access to the tower."[109]

From the glittering omniscient eyes of their exalted image of Buddhism, the emperor and empress were afforded an enchanting new view of themselves. Narcissistic fascination heightened by vertigo would also be the drug of immortality sought by a later ruler, Empress Wu Zetian, whose passion for Buddhism will be a topic in the following chapter. The Northern Wei rulers, however, were not long able to enjoy their paramount *amour*.

The conflagration of Yongning Monastery in 534 was later seen as an unmistakable omen of the impending fall of the Northern Wei, both heralding a new dynasty and remaining in imperial memory as a sign of the increasing power of a Buddhist mandate in uneasy alliance with that of Heaven.[110] To hindsight, the faults of the Northern Wei were pitilessly exposed with the ruin of Luoyang, and much of the blame was placed upon Buddhist-inspired excess. As we shall see in the next chapter, the story of Bodhidharma's retort to Emperor Wu of the Liang was intended as an antinomian declaration of independence. If the encounter had actually taken place in the sixth century, however, "no merit" might have been understood as a justified warning of karmic retribution.

This recapitulation of the rise and fall of the one of the earliest Chinese Buddhist dynasties may have found its way into this narrative of transmission for no better reason than my early and continuing attraction to the art of the Northern Wei, to the "archaic smile" of their Buddhist images. Yet, nostalgia aside, the pieties and politics of this era formed a large part of the inheritance of the Tang, and so this brief study has helped me

[109] *Luoyang qielan ji*, Wang, trans., 1984: 20.

[110] *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.

to think about the further permutations of Saṅgha-state relations in the eighth century. More specifically, the Northern Wei saw the appearance of many of apocryphal texts that would influence the form of practice and transmission in the Tang. In the following sections I will discuss five of these texts: the *Renwang jing*, *Fanwang jing*, *Yingluo jing*, *Tiwei jing* and *Fu fazang zhuan*.

## Apocryphal Bodhisattva Precepts Texts: the *Renwang jing*, *Fanwang jing*, and *Yingluo jing*

A number of new scriptures appeared during the decades following the Northern Wei persecution. While some were indeed translations, many were "indigenous scriptures" or apocrypha, compilations that may have elaborated upon earlier translations of authentically Indian scriptures but introduced new features that made them more relevant to the Chinese milieu.[111] I will now turn to a handful of these apocrypha in which repentance and lay ordination play a central role. In discussing these texts, I will assess the degree to which authority for transmission of the Dharma and precepts continued to be the privilege of clergy fully ordained according to traditional Vinaya, as well as indications of encroachment upon this privilege.

Prominent among apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts are the *Renwang [banruopoluomi] jing* 仁王[般若波羅蜜]經 (*[Prajñāpāramitā]* Scripture of Humane Kings), *T.* 8 (245) & (246); the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (*Brahmajāla-sūtra*; Scripture of

[111] As will be seen, I am deeply indebted to the work of Kyoko Tokuno and much admire her research and original contributions. However, I find myself as yet unable to abandon the terms "apocryphal" or "spurious" scripture for her recommended term, "indigenous scripture." See Tokuno 1994: 1-7. I feel it is necessary to maintain a distinction between Buddhist works that were avowedly indigenous (like the *Lidai fabao ji*), and those that claimed to be translations or compilations of Indian sūtras and that attempted to retain some of the formal qualities of foreign scriptures. Given current discourse on the absence of any fundamental textual quality that is *not* referential (and deferential), the choice to use "apocryphal" does not mean that *we* now privilege Indian scriptures, but rather acknowledges that Chinese Buddhists through the Tang did in fact privilege texts with a certified Indian pedigree, however freely they may have used texts suspected or known to be indigenous.

Brahma's Net), *T.* 24 (1484); and the *[Pusa]yingluo [benye] jing* [菩薩]瓔珞[本業]經 (Scripture of the [Original Acts that Serve as] Necklaces [for the Bodhisattvas]), *T.* 24 (1485). These three closely related texts drew from the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, *Bodhisattvabhūmi* and *Upāsakaśīla-sūtra* translations discussed previously, but they also share characteristics which distinguish them from earlier Mahāyāna precepts texts. Significantly all three, particularly the *Renwang jing*, introduced rites for the protection of the state into schemas of the bodhisattva path and precepts. The sources and the dominant concerns of these scriptures bespeak northern origins.

The *Renwang jing* is presumed to be the earliest of the three, and could have been compiled during or soon after the Northern Wei persecution. There are two "translations" extant, one attributed to Kumārajīva and the other attributed to Bukong 不空 (Amoghavajra, 705-774).[112] As the title suggests, the text is addressed particularly to "humane king" bodhisattvas, who are enjoined to cultivate the initial "ten stages of belief" (*shixin* 十信) in face of the Dharma's imminent demise. It thus partakes of the "decline of the Dharma" (*mofa* 末法 or *moshi* 末世) eschatology that was to become a pronounced feature of Chinese Buddhist thought in the sixth century. Doctrines concerning the final degenerate age of the Dharma predicted in Indian canonical scripture have been much studied by Japanese scholars, and the issues are elucidated in a recent study by Jan Nattier, so I will not elaborate here. Nattier argues that belief in the advent of the final age of the Dharma was triggered as much by anxiety over internal laxity of the Saṅgha as by external persecution. Regarding the *Renwang jing*, Nattier writes it is the only example of a scripture "which blames the demise of the Dharma not on non-Buddhist intruders but on the overregulation of the sangha by the state."[113] We will have

[112] Orzech 1996: 372-373.

[113] Nattier 1991: 128. See especially the last section of the "Kumārajīva translation" of the *Renwang jing*, *T.* 8 (245) 833b12-834a7.

occasion to return to the *Renwang jing* in the next chapter, when discussing relations between Saṅgha and state in the late sixth and early seventh century.

Both the *Renwang jing* and the *Fanwang jing* were alleged to have been translated by Kumārajīva. A postface to the *Fanwang jing* included in the *Chu sanzang ji ji* claims that upon completion of the translation, Kumārajīva administered the bodhisattva precepts to three hundred people.[114] However, internal evidence suggests that the *Fanwang jing* could not have been compiled before 431, and a Dunhuang manuscript establishes a *terminus ad quem* no later than 480. The ten major and forty-eight minor precepts contained in the second fascicle circulated as an independent text by the end of the fifth century, and although the *Fanwang jing*'s authenticity was questioned as early as the sixth century, its version of the precepts continued to be used as a *bodhisattvaprātimokṣa*.[115]

As Paul Groner points out, increasing access to the complete *Vinaya* translations of the early fifth century would have brought the alien qualities of Buddhist practice and ideology even more sharply into focus.[116] Even in the "barbarian" north, anyone who had been raised with the basic Chinese cultural compound of "Daoist" spiritual medicology and Confucian notions of filial piety would have been repulsed by the numerous *Vinaya* stories dwelling upon revulsion for the body, mortification of the body, and abandonment of parents and family. The *Fanwang jing* blend of monastic and lay precepts may have been an attempt to ameliorate these incompatibilities. In the section preceding the

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[114] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 79b27-c5.

[115] Groner 1990a: 252-254. The ten major precepts of the *Fanwang jing* are: not killing, not stealing, not indulging in sexual misconduct, not lying, not drinking alcohol, not speaking about the transgressions of the four-fold assembly, not praising oneself and denigrating others, not injuring another through one's avarice, not harboring aversion and refusing repentance, not speaking ill of the Three Jewels. The forty-eight minor precepts are too lengthy to summarize, but several of them will be discussed individually. For an annotated French translation and commentary, see De Groot 1893.

[116] Groner 1990a: 255.

precepts, filial piety is introduced: "When Sākyamuni Buddha sat under the bodhi tree and attained supreme enlightenment, that was when he first enjoined the *bodhisattvaprātimokṣa* and filial submission towards parents, teachers, clergy, and the Three Jewels. Filial submission is the Dharma of the ultimate path. Filial piety is called *śīla*, also called restraint."[117]

It is noteworthy that this accommodation to secular principles condoned the Confucian obligations of laypersons and extended the notion of filiality to include the Saṅgha, but did not enjoin secular obligations upon clerics. Expressly countering the general praise of filial piety quoted from the introductory section, the fortieth minor precept says that those who have left home should not pay obeisance to rulers or parents, nor honor kin and spirits, and are only obliged to understand the words of the Dharma master.[118]

The *Fanwang jing* creates explicit precepts out of the kind of negative reciprocity defended by Huiyuan and the leading clerics of the southern regimes. By "negative reciprocity" I mean the mirror-image refutation of Confucian principles: the clergy were not to pay homage to parents or rulers, but they were also not to seek individual benefit from the system of patronage sustained by the principles of reciprocal relationship. The twenty-sixth through twenty-eighth minor precepts develop this theme at length, prohibiting the clergy from accepting personal gifts and invitations from the laity, and prohibiting the laity from offering such personal favors.[119] The thirty-sixth recommends vows calling down an imaginative array of fiery torments upon oneself should one accept gifts in violation of the precepts.[120]

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[117] *Fanwang jing*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1004a23-24. Filial obedience is also repeated as the first of the vows in the 35th precept: *ibid.*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1007b27.

[118] *Ibid.*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1008c4-6.

[119] *Ibid.*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1007a3-22.

[120] *Ibid.*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1007c3-1008a12.

In practice, of course, there was a thin line between accepting individual benefit and accepting universal benefit on behalf of the Three Jewels. This danger is implicitly acknowledged in the eloquent warning of the forty-eighth and final precept, admonishing that the most reprehensible abuses of the Dharma are those stemming from within the Saṅgha. Regarding clergy who would preach the precepts to gain favors, or perversely implicate monks, nuns or lay disciples in "enfettering" behavior: "[Such would be] like the Dharma of a prisoner, like the Dharma of a slave of the army, like the worms within the body of a lion that feed upon the lion's flesh, not [the fault of] any outside worms."[121]

Groner argues that "the contents of the *Fan-wang* precepts also suggest that the compilers hoped to compose a set of precepts that would join monks, nuns, and lay believers in a common organization."[122] The *Fanwang jing* certainly inveighs against secular class distinctions, and the thirty-eighth minor precept includes a leveling measure encompassing both clergy and laity: "Those who were ordained first should be seated first, and those who were ordained later should sit below them. It does not matter whether one is young, old, a monk, nun, king, prince, or even a eunuch or a slave."[123] However, final authority was still vested in the clergy, and I cannot find support in the *Fanwang jing* for Groner's claim that "Lay believers might confer the precepts on others . . . ."[124] Rather, the forty-first minor precept says that "a bodhisattva" can instruct a neophyte, but when someone wants to receive the precepts one should request the attendance of two masters, the Upādhyāya (*heshang* 和上) and Ācārya (*asheli* 阿闍梨).[125]

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[121] DeGroot 1893: 82. (I prefer this version to the more frequently quoted version found in the *Taisho* edition, *T.* 24 (1484) 1009b16-17, but DeGroot used different editions, and I have not as yet tracked down the original for his reproduction of the Chinese text of the 48th precept.)

[122] Groner 1990a: 255.

[123] *Fanwang jing*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1008b1-3. Groner, trans., 1990a: 256.

[124] Groner 1990a: 256.

[125] *Fanwang jing*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1008c9-11. The roles of ordination officiants will be briefly discussed at the end of this section.

The fortieth minor precept, noted above as including an injunction against obeisance to parents or rulers, also exemplifies the oscillation between inclusive and exclusive tendencies. It begins by emphasizing that everyone without distinction may receive the precepts and then stresses the importance of distinctly-colored *kaṣāya*, the meaning of which is expanded to refer to all canonical attire, even bedding. The thrust of the passage at first seems to be that all who take the (bodhisattva) precepts are thus distinguished from those who do not, but the final line introduces ambiguity about who is being distinguished from whom -- whether "monk" (*biqiu* 比丘) stands for all precepts-recipients, or whether fully-ordained monks are being distinguished from other precepts-recipients:

> When a disciple of the Buddha would allow people to receive the precepts, he/she cannot be selective. All kings and princes, great ministers and public officials, monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, male adulterers and female adulterers, the emperors of the eighteen Brahmalokas and the six desire-realms, those of no sex and of either sex, eunuchs, male and female slaves, and absolutely any demon and spirit can receive the precepts. One must teach [them] about the *kaṣāya* that is worn on the body, all use dull colors in conformity with the Way. All [must] dye every dyed cloth with blue, yellow, red, black or purple colors, even bedding is completely in dull colors. Any cloth worn on the body is of dyed colors. Any clothing worn by the peoples of [other] domains and the Middle Kingdom -- the monks must all be differentiated from such worldly clothing.[126]

Groner acknowledges that *de facto* application of the *Fanwang jing*'s all-inclusive principles was probably limited: "And while members of the Buddhist Order and lay believers were sometimes ordained at the same time, there is little indication that they actually practiced together. The focus of a universal organization for monastics and laity

[126] *Fanwang jing*, *T*. 24 (1484) 1008b21-28.

based on the *Fan-wang* precepts would probably have been fortnightly assemblies for chanting the precepts. . . . However, it is not clear that the universal assembly of people of all social classes envisioned in the *Fan-wang ching* ever existed."[127]

According to Groner's assessment of the attitudes of later Chinese commentators, it seems that most opted to maintain some system distinguishing precepts for laity, novices and clergy, and that the bodhisattva precepts served as a kind of capping "Mahāyānization" of the process, seldom taken as solely sufficient.[128] In spite of its standard denigration of "*śrāvaka* precepts" this is in keeping with the spirit of the *Fanwang jing*, for its keynote is noblesse oblige and its tacit message is that fully ordained clergy are the most obligated -- and the most noble.

The *Yingluo jing*, on the other hand, sanctioned use of the bodhisattva precepts alone, and also sanctioned lay believers administering the precepts -- spouses and family members could even confer them on each other.[129] The *Yingluo jing* is alleged to be a translation by Zhu Fonian 竺佛念, dating from after the Liangzhou monk's arrival in Changan in 465. It was based on a third century translation by Zhi Qian 支謙, the *Pusa benye jing* 菩薩本業經 (Scripture of the Original Acts of the Bodhisattva), *T.* 10 (281), which was the earliest translation to outline the ten stage bodhisattva path. The fifth century *Yingluo jing* is notable for elaborating upon the initial "ten stages of belief" and placing them before the forty-two stage path introduced through Buddhabhadra's *Avataṃsaka* translation. This comprehensive treatment made for a lengthy bodhisattva career, with allowance for lifetimes spent on mastery of the ten basic precepts and initial vows. While progress was measured by one's success in keeping these precepts,

[127] Groner 1990a: 256.

[128] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

[129] *Yingluo jing*, *T.* 24 (1485) 1021b13. See Groner 1990b: 230.

provisions were made for lapses on the part of the "bodhisattva in intention."[130]

However, taking a significant step down the "collapsed path" of early Chan, the *Yingluo jing* reified the *Avataṃsaka*-like notion that all stages of progress are already encompassed in the initial inclination. Stephen Bokenkamp, who elucidates the incorporation of the bodhisattva path into Daoist scriptures, says: "The *Ying-lo ching*, though concerned primarily with those on the initial stages of the path and itself guilty of helping to lengthen the bodhisattva path with its ten stages of belief, dares to raise the notion of "sudden enlightenment' (*tun-chüeh*) and gradual enlightenment (*chien-chüeh*), concluding that 'there are no gradually enlightened world-honored ones, but only suddenly-enlightened tathāgatas.'"[131]

Along with collapsing the stages of the path, the *Yingluo jing* followed the *Fanwang jing* in allowing laypeople to partake in some practices previously reserved for the ordained. Both works formalized procedures for receiving the precepts by confession and repentance validated by the penitent's reception of visionary signs, without requiring mediation by the clergy. Repentance and reception of the precepts was one of the most accessible means of gaining merit in order to sweeten karmic retribution, and the incorporation of self-administering vows into many of the apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts suggests that the practice became widespread. Groner notes that although in the *Yingluo jing* self-admininistration was ranked lower than precepts conferred by a qualified teacher, the description of the former is more detailed, which he ascribes to its probable popularity.[132]

As discussed above, emphasis on the testimony of visualization was a feature of the

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[130] Bokenkamp 1990: 123-125, 135. For a summary of the *Yingluo jing*'s textual history, see *ibid.*, pp. 141-142 n. 30.

[131] *Ibid.*, p. 137; *Yingluo jing*, *T.* 24 (1485) 1018c8-21.

[132] Groner 1990b: 232.

Dharmakṣema-influenced Buddhism imported from Liangzhou. It is difficult to tell whether the practice was already highly developed at the time of Dharmakṣema, or if the shape of later practice was retroactively reflected back upon the prime disseminator of the bodhisattva precepts.

Dharmakṣema's sources for the practice, the *Yogācārabhūmi* and *Bodhisattvabūmi*, allowed for monks and nuns to receive bodhisattva precepts without a master. The petitioner was to repeat formulae of confessions and vows before Buddhist images and ask the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to confer the precepts. It was necessary to receive a manifestation of a good sign in order to be sure that one had indeed obtained the precepts. These texts did not elaborate about how one was to go about obtaining the signs, although in the *Bodhisattvabūmi* "a cool wind" is specified as acceptable.[133] In the twenty-third minor precept of the *Fanwang jing*, a source for the *Yingluo jing* version, the protocol is more detailed. Like the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, it stipulates that reception of a sign (*haoxiang* 好相) is necessary for validation, but the *Fanwang jing* further says that if an ordained teacher confers the precepts then a sign is unnecessary. Unlike the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, in the *Fanwang jing* the self-ministrant is not required to state that he or she is already fully ordained. The *Fanwang jing* does not however go as far as another apocryphon, the *Zhancha jing*, which explicitly allowed for self-conferral of full ordination.[134] The *Fanwang jing* states:

> Once one obtains a good sign then one has succeeded in receiving the precepts before images of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. If one does not obtain a good sign, then although one has [self-] administered the precepts

[133] *Pusadichi jing*, *T*. 30 (1581) 912b-913a. See also *Pusa shanjie jing*, *T*. (1583) 1014a-c and *Yuqie shidi lun*, *T*. 30 (1579) 521b. Discussed in Kuo 1994: 40-45, and Groner 1990b: 227-229.

[134] *Zhancha shanwuyebao jing* 占察善惡業報經 (Book of Divining the Requital of Good and Evil Actions) *T*. 17 (839) 904c. Whalen Lai argues that it is a late sixth-century text of Northern origins. For a discussion of the diverse aspects of this fascinating work, see Lai 1990: 175-206.

> before the image of a Buddha, one has not obtained the precepts. If one receives the precepts directly from a Dharma master who has previously received the bodhisattva precepts, then one need not see a good sign. Why? Because the Dharma masters confer [the precepts] from master to master, there is no need for good signs, and so when one receives the precepts before a Dharma master, one has indeed obtained the precepts. It is because one produces the most heartfelt respect that one succeeds in obtaining the precepts.[135]

Here it is clear that the reception of a good sign obviates the need for the clergy, and the presence of properly invested clergy obviates the need for a good sign. This underscores their mutual signification, substitution -- regardless of the merits of the monk as an individual, once invested with the role of Dharma master, he is a good sign. The good sign is vouchsafed by the images of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and by the transmission of the precepts from one master to another. Thus we have another level of substitution in which both Buddhist images and the line of transmission of precepts masters embody the Dharma and are empowered to reproduce the good signs of themselves. The sympathetic magic seen working through substitution and reproduction in the *Fanwang jing* is not so far removed from the manifestations of "mind-to-mind transmission" in eighth century Chan. As we shall see in the *Lidai fabao ji* the physical mirroring of Wuzhu and his master Wuxiang is emphasized, and the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography of Wuxiang recounts stories of the miraculous powers of his statue.

The strength and extent of the threads linking the bodhisattva precepts, images, repentance, good signs and, not incidentally, Kashmir and Maitreya, are reinforced in a text which is not a northern bodhisattva precepts apocryphon but rather a contemplation sūtra translated in the south, the *Guan Puxianpusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經

[135] *Fanwang jing*, *T.* 24 (1484) 1006c5-15. For the passage of similar import in the *Yingluo jing*, see *T.* 24 (1485) 1020c4-10.

(Scripture of the Methods of Contemplation of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra).[136] The translation is attributed to Dharmamitra 曇摩蜜多, a Kashmiri monk active in Jiangkang from 424-442. In the ritual for self-administered bodhisattva precepts prescribed in this text, the petitioner appeals to the omniscience, wisdom and mercy of Śākyamuni, Mañjuśri and Maitreya. The petitioner then asks that Śākyamuni serve as his or her Upādhyāya (Preceptor, *heshang* 和上), Mañjuśri as [Karma]-ācārya (Master [of karma], *[jiemo]asheli* [羯磨]阿闍梨), and Maitreya as Anuśāsanī-ācārya (Guarantor, *jiaoshoushi* 教授師).[137] It is said to be not absolutely necessary that these vows be taken before an image in order to obtain the good signs confirming possession of the precepts. As Kuo Li-ying points out, here we find the officiants of Vinaya ordination ritual transposed into a Mahāyāna context of visualization and contemplation.[138]

This visionary blending of images and precepts masters points again to their mutual signification, their "form that is emptiness" that will, a few centuries later, convey the formless precepts. In fact, the *Guan Puxianpusa xingfa jing* is notable for stressing emptiness as the basis of the precepts. Groner says of this text: "The crucial point in the ceremony was devoted to the candidate's realization of the supreme truth of nonsubstantiality, not to the conferral of the precepts. Once the candidate had understood that all is nonsubstantial, he would no longer have any desires that would lead to violations of the precepts. This view is similar to some of the statements in the *Platform Sūtra*, though no direct connection between the two texts can be demonstrated."[139] Whether or not actual influence between these particular works can be traced, it is important to realize the conceptual proximity between face-to-face encounters with the

136 *T.* 9 (277)

137 Texts vary as to whether *ācārya* is translated (*shi* 師), or transliterated (*asheli* 阿闍梨).

138 Kuo 1994: 43-45. See *Guan Puxianpusa xingfa jing*, *T.* 9 (277) 393c11-25.

139 Groner 1990b: 238.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas offered in the bodhisattva precepts texts, and the mind-to-mind encounters of Chan. "This very image is the Buddha" soon became "this very body is the Buddha" and "this very teacher is the Buddha."

## The *Tiwei jing*

The paradigmatic "indigenous scripture," perhaps the most thinly disguised of the Northern Wei apocrypha, is the *Tiwei [Boli]jing* 提謂[波利]經 (Scripture of Trapuṣa [and Ballika]).[140] I am particularly interested in the text's assimilation of a variety of sources in service of exclusive principles based on the teachings of retribution, and its inclusive yet stringent notion of the locus of authority.

The earliest reference to this text is in the *Chusanzang ji ji*, where it is already listed as suspect. The reference even gives the name of the compiler, the monk Tanjing 曇靖, and the period of compilation, 452-464.[141] Discussed in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Tanyao, Tanjing's motivation was said to be his realization that with all the older scriptures lost in the fires of the persecution, something was needed for the instruction of the people.[142] The extant manuscripts are from Dunhuang. Kyoko Tokuno's analysis of the Dunhuang manuscripts and the extensive citations in other works from the sixth through the eighth centuries demonstrates two major lines of textual affiliation, and shows that the text continued to be revised through the seventh century.[143]

The familiar *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, *Yogācārabhūmi*, and *Bodhisattvabhūmi* were clearly sources for the *Tiwei jing* compiler. Other likely Buddhist sources include two early fifth century indigenous compilations elaborating upon the five precepts, and a fourth century

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[140] S. 2051, P. 3732.

[141] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 39a 24-25.

[142] *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks) *T.* 50 (2060) 428a 5-12.

[143] Tokuno 1994: 82-100. The work cited here, Tokuno's dissertation, includes her annotated translation based on S. 2051 and P. 3732.

southern treatise on essential teachings for the laity. The framing pretext was possibly inspired by Dharmakṣema's lay precepts text, *Upāsakaśīla-sūtra*, in which the merchant Trapuṣa is mentioned as recipient of the Buddha's teaching on the Three Refuges.[144] The legend of Trapuṣa and Ballika as the first recipients of the Buddha's teaching was known from translations of *Jātaka* stories, and the motif appears in the Yungang caves.[145]

The *Tiwei jing* is notable for its assimilation of indigenous Chinese sources and concepts. The five basic Buddhist precepts are overlaid with Han Chinese notions of correspondence between the directions, planets, mountains, mythic emperors, elements, and organs of the body. It is striking how much of the text is taken up with precisely identifying diseases with transgressions; for example, taking life is associated with diseases of the liver and a bluish-yellow complexion.[146]

The text also stresses filial piety and loyalty and equates the Buddhist precepts with the five practical virtues of a Han classic, the *Xiao jing* 孝經(Classic of Filial Piety), as well as evoking the five secular-legalist punishments for transgressions. One of the versions includes an appendix enumerating two hundred and fifty rules of deportment, clearly intended as a lay counterpart to the Vinaya rules for monks. The Daoist-Confucian blend of Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283-343) *Baopu zi* 抱朴子 (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity) was a direct source for the *Tiwei jing* version of the belief that celestial account-keeping regarding one's good and bad actions determines one's life-span.[147]

Rituals of repentance played a crucial role in eliminating demerit. The basic formula for confession and petition is similar to that of the precepts texts discussed above, but the

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[144] *Youposejie jing* 優婆塞戒經, *T.* 25 (1488), previously mentioned in the section on Dharmakṣema.

[145] Trapuṣa is the only interlocutor in the *Tiwei jing*, and Ballika, who appears in some versions of the title, is seldom mentioned in the text. See Tokuno 1994: 100, 111-117, 128 n. 44.

[146] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

[147] *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 119, 125 n. 29, 155-156, 208-209.

content is a lengthy litany of confession for every terrible sin that the petitioner has committed in past lives. Keeping the precepts was promised to increase the protective spirits who guard against the evil forces that cause disease.[148] Hence, failure to keep the precepts is revealed by disease:

> [Conversely,] those who fail to keep one precept will have five demerits and five good spirits will leave them, while violating five precepts brings twenty-five demerits and twenty-five good spirits will leave them. All gods and good spirits will be grieved and unhappy, the commissioner of fate will reduce their life-span, and all evil ghost-spirits will encamp before the gates and doors [of their bodies.] Accordingly, they will become debilitated and diseased. . . . Those worldly, ordinary people who do not understand the dharma say that they serve the Buddha; but contrary to [their claims] they also become debilitated and die.[149]

Association with a preceptor or a "good friend" was of inestimable value in negotiating this difficult accounting because receiving the precepts from a truly qualified person effected the removal of demerits. The criteria for the locus of this efficacy were somewhat subjective. As the "theodicy of fortune" here depends upon health as a measure of virtue, physical signs of legitimate authority should override formal ones, but this is not explicitly proposed in the text. The preceptor is said to be one who has mastered the precepts in his (or presumably her) own life and who also complies with secular law. The fully-ordained could be unfit and a lay person could be qualified, allowing assessment of worth to weigh more heavily than the formal distinction between lay and ordained. Significantly, the monk however dissolute was to be afforded external marks of respect as a representative of the Saṅgha , while the layperson however worthy

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[148] *Ibid.*, pp. 169-174, 250-256.

[149] *Ibid.*, Tokuno, trans., p. 305.

was not.[150]

> Besides, oh *upāsaka*, even if there were no *śramaṇas* in this country, if men and women enjoy doing good and enjoy [observing] the precepts, then the *upāsaka* precepts will be complete. [As long as] they understand [proper] conduct and deportment, they are the possessors of wisdom and thoughtfulness, and the possessors of authority who fittingly understand the salvation of others. Those who are completely equipped with all the above [qualities] can themselves confer the precepts on others. But only the Buddhas and the *bhikṣusaṅgha*, who can teach and convert the ten directions, can accept the worship of the laity. It is not fitting even for an elder to accept worship [simply because of his status.][151]

What is remarkable here is the degree of bifurcation between efficacy and formal legitimacy. Although the existence of worthless monks was frequently lamented both within and without the Saṅgha, up until this time transmission of the potency of the teachings had remained the prerogative of fully-ordained monks.

It is difficult to assess how far this theoretical license actually went, or how it effected the organization and practices of lay Buddhists in the Northern Wei. The *Tiwei jing* itself prescribes retreats for particular observance of the precepts according to the yin/yang-based calendar of the Buddho-Chinese celestial officials who were keeping an account of one's actions.[152] Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667), however, speaks of contemporary *Tiwei* cultists of a lay association (*yiyi* 義邑) who observed a semblance of the fortnightly *uposatha* "wearing robes and holding bowls."[153]

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[150] *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 168, 283-286.

[151] *Ibid.*, Tokuno, trans., p. 286.

[152] *Ibid.*, pp. 275-280.

[153] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 428a7-21. Whalen Lai links *Tiwei jing*-based lay associations with Northern Wei governmental Saṅgha-households, but it is not clear to me what evidence he has for this. Lai 1987b: 13-14.

The *Fu fazang zhuan*

The *Fu fazang [yinyuan] zhuan* 付法藏[因緣]傳 (Traditions [of the Causes and Conditions] of Transmission of the Dharma Treasury)[154] provides salient comparisons with the texts discussed above, and it is a major source for the version of the patriarchal lineage that is found in the *Lidai fabao ji*. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s even rewrote the final patriarchal biography in the *Fu fazang zhuan* so as to create an unbroken lineage. In contrast to the apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts, this possibly apocryphal lineage text promotes a very narrow definition of transmission.

The origins of the *Fu fazang zhuan* are unclear. In the *Chu sanzang ji ji* it is listed as a translation completed in 472 by Tanyao and the Indian monk Kiṅkara 吉迦夜.[155] The compiler of the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記 refers to the mention of a *Fu fazang zhuan* in an earlier catalogue, for which the *terminus ad quem* of 481 has been established.[156] The *Lidai sanbao ji* notice on Tanyao claims that after the persecution Tanyao regretted leaving the mountains where he hid during the persecution. Therefore he sequestered himself in a cave temple with a group of monks to re-translate a number of sūtras, including the *Fu fazang zhuan*, in order to restore the integrity of Dharma transmission that persecution had threatened to interrupt.[157]

The Song dynasty Chan scholar Qisong 契嵩 (1007-1072) states in his *Chuanfa zhengzong lun* 傳法正宗論 (Treatise of the True Doctrine of Transmission of the Dharma) that Tanyao compiled the text himself. He claims that Tanyao escaped the

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[154] *T.* 50 (2058). For the following section on the *Fu fazang zhuan*, I am greatly indebted to discussions with Elizabeth Morrison and John Kieshnick during our Chinese Buddhist texts reading group at Stanford in 1994-95. I am also grateful to Elizabeth Morrison for sending me her 1995 paper on the topic, "The *Fufazang yinyuan zhuan* and the Ancestry of Genealogy in Medieval Chinese Buddhism."

[155] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 13b6-12.

[156] Maspero 1911: 129.

[157] *Lidai sanbao ji*, *T.* 49 (2034) 62b-63a.

persecution with the single record of the patriarchy that was in the imperial storehouse, but it was lost during his years in the mountain wilderness. When Buddhism was restored and Tanyao was superintendent he reproduced the *Fu fazang zhuan*, presumably based upon his memory of the lost text, but it was faulty and incomplete. Qisong cites an eighth century disciple of the sixth Chan patriarch Huineng as his source for this story.[158]

Given the fact that the eighth century saw the advent of a passion for the unbroken Chan lineage, a passion that by the eleventh century had become canonical, both Qisong and his putative source had reason to desire to discredit the veracity of the *Fu fazang zhuan*. For the *Fu fazang zhuan* ends dramatically with the severance of the direct line of transmission from the Buddha due to the murder of Siṁha-bhikṣu 師子比丘 in Kashmir. Qisong waxes rather indignant over the idea that a patriarch would not be able to foresee his own death and transmit the Dharma forthwith.[159] In the stories of transmission he uses as examples, he emphasizes the predestined quality of the patriarchal succession even more prominently than do his immediate sources, the *Baolin zhuan* and *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Record of the Transmission of the Lamp [Compiled] in the Jingde era).[160]

Henri Maspero raises the question as to whether or not the present text is the same as the text in the fifth century catalogues. His analysis of notices in sixth century catalogues shows that it is possible that by then there were two versions of the *Fu fazang zhuan*. The earliest quotations of the text as we know it, however, date from the seventh century and are all, interestingly enough, in texts linked to Daoxuan or the *Dharmagupta Vinaya*.[161] Daoxuan was considered the founding patriarch of the *Dharmagupta Vinaya*

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[158] *Chuanfa zhengzong lun*, *T.* 51 (2080) 774a28-b9.

[159] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2080) 774a10-17.

[160] *T.* 51 (2076).

[161] Maspero 1911: 130-138.

school, so this confluence might merit further investigation.

The text seems to be a pastiche of translated Indian texts, relying heavily on the *Aśokarājasūtra* as well as including material from the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* and several translations of separate biographies. There is some conceptual similarity between the *Fu fazang zhuan* and the *Mohemoye jing* 摩訶摩耶經 (*Mahāmāyā-sūtra*, Scripture of [the Buddha's Mother] Mahāmāyā), translated in the south between 479-502.[162] The latter work has a lineage of seven masters linked to five periods of the true Dharma, after which Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna carry the torch for two more generations, but beyond them the Dharma is said to be in decline.[163] Maspero favors the hypothesis that the *Fu fazang zhuan* is a sixth century Chinese compilation that for a time may have existed simultaneously with an earlier authentic translation.[164] However, the milieu and motivations of the compiler of the present text remain a mystery.

It is clear that the *Fu fazang zhuan* appeals to different instincts of preservation and transmission than the inclusive tendency apparent in the *Tiwei Boli jing* and other fifth century texts. The *Fu fazang zhuan* identifies transmission of the Dharma with a single line of transmission from master to disciple, beginning with Śākyamuni and ending with the twenty-third patriarch Siṁha in Kashmir.[165]

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[162] *T.* 12 (383)

[163] The *Fu fazang zhuan* shares four names with the *Mahāmāyā-sūtra:* Mahākāśapa and Upagupta are the two masters of the first period in the *Mahāmāyā*, and Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna also appear in the middle generations of the *Fufazang zhuan*.

[164] Maspero 1911: 139-146. Maspero's argument is based in part on the correspondence between the *Fu fazang zhuan* and *Aśokarājasūtra* accounts of the five disciples who carried on the transmission after the Buddha's death. The latter work was first translated by Saṅghapāla 僧伽婆羅 in 512 as the *Ayu wang jing* 阿育王經 (*Scripture of King Aśoka*), *T.* 50 (2043). There are also accounts of the Buddha's disciples in An Faqin's 安法欽 early 4th century translation of the *Aśokavadāna*, *Ayu wang zhuan* 阿育王傳 (*Biography of King Aśoka*), *T.* 50 (2042), but they are not as similar to those in the *Fu fazang zhuan*.

Non-textual traces may remain that could provide some clues. Kenneth Chen says that Siṁha-bhikṣu's murder is portrayed in caves 9 and 10 at Yungang, but he gives no reference for this identification. See Chen 1964: 167.

[165] The line of transmission is serial with the exception of one collateral transmission in the third

Guanding 觀頂 (561-632), disciple of the great Tiantai 天台 patriarch Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), wrote a pertinent introduction to the latter's monumental work, the *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (The Great Cessation and Insight). In this introduction, he summarizes the *Fu fazang zhuan* account of the Indian patriarchs, and refers to this as the lineage of those who had "received prediction from the Golden-mouthed Ones."[166] The prediction of the future circumstances of Dharma transmission is a scriptural topos indicating a profound link between the bestower and the subject of the prediction.[167] In Guanding's introduction, this chain of golden links leads towards but is not made to stretch as far as the lineage of Zhiyi in China. The broken lineage may have been lamented, but it was not mended until early proponents of the Chan school took it up in the eighth century.

There were several different lists of patriarchs produced by various factions of the nascent Chan school. A good summary is provided in the first chapter of Philip Yampolsky's study on the *Platform Sūtra*. Yampolsky made a chart of the patriarch lists found in eighth century Chan works and compared these with the two main source texts, the *Fu fazang zhuan* and Buddhabhadra's preface to his translation of the *Damoduoluo chan jing* 達摩多羅禪經 (*The Dhyāna-sūtra of Dharmatrāta*).[168] As discussed in the previous chapter, Buddhabhadra's preface included several names from his Kashmiri Sarvāstivāda lineage, and Huiyuan's and Huiguan's prefaces to the same work include slightly different versions of this pedigree. Furthermore, Sengyou compiled a record of the Sarvāstivāda school which includes two long variant lists of fifty-three and fifty-four

generation, discussed below.

[166] *Mohe zhiguan*, *T.* 46 (1911) 1a13-1b9; Donner and Stevenson, trans., 1993: 100-103. See also their discussion of Tiantai lineage, pp. 22-24, 33-39.

[167] See, for example, the Buddha's predictions about Upagupta in the *Ayu wang jing*, *T.* 50 (2043) 149b-1150a.

[168] Yampolsky 1967: 8-9.

names, only intermittently arranged in chronological order.[169] There is some overlap between the *Fu fazang zhuan* list and Sengyou's Sarvāstivāda list, but some of the names appearing in the former have yet to be identified with any other source.

Demiéville discusses an intriguing mythos linking the Kashmiri Sarvāstivāda masters with the future Buddhas, connected also with traditions of the rebirth of Sarvāstivāda masters in Tuṣita. In Daoan's preface to the *Zun Poxumi pusa suoji lun* 尊婆須蜜菩薩所集論,[170] Vasumitra is said to be the next future Buddha after Maitreya (the 5th Buddha of this age), to be reborn eventually as Siṁha Tathāgata (the 6th). Vasumitra/Siṁha Tathāgata was said to have gone to Tuṣita in samādhi and visited the other future Buddhas: Maitreya, and the two Sarvāstivāda masters Maitreyaśrī (the 7th, Pradyota Tathāgata) and Saṅgharakṣa (the 8th, the Buddha Muni).[171] One might surmise that the *Fu fazang zhuan* legend of the mysterious Siṁha-bhikṣu may have owed something to the Kashmiri tradition of the future Buddha Siṁha Tathāgata.[172]

The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s appear to be the source for the happy idea of using the *Fu fazang zhuan* list to fill out the obvious insufficiency of Shenhui's notion of "unbroken transmission." Shenhui bridged the gap between the first few Indian generations of disciples and the Chinese patriarchs with a handful of names derived from the Sarvāstivāda lineage. He takes the five figures from the *Aśokarājasūtra* as the first five "patriarchs," and added 6) Śubhamitra 須婆蜜多, an unknown figure who may be a

[169] See McRae 1986: 80-81 for a summary comparison of these lists. Buddhabhadra's evocation of lineage in his preface to the *Damoduoluo chan jing* are found at *T.* 15 (618) 301c6-9. In the *Chu sanzang ji ji*, the names in Huiyuan's preface are at *T.* 55 (2145) 65c9-12, 66a11 and Huiguan's are at *ibid.* 66c5-7, 21-25, 67a2-3. The two long lists comprise most of Sengyou's record of Sarvāstivāda masters, *ibid.* 88c29-90a3.

[170] *Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṃghītiśāstra* (Treatise compiled by the Venerable Bodhisattva Vasumitra), *T.* 28 (1549).

[171] *Chu sanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 71c8-72a8. See Demiéville 1954: 366-368.

[172] According to the *Taishō* index Siṁha-bhikṣu does not appear in any canonical work besides the *Fu fazang zhuan*.

scrambling of Vasumitra 婆須蜜 from Buddhabhadra's list, and 7) Saṅgharakṣa 僧迦羅叉, who is the figure between Vasumitra and Dharmatrāta 達摩多羅 in Buddhabhadra's list.[173] Shenhui replaced Dharmatrāta with 8) Bodhidharma, but the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s tried to retain both, with "Bodhidharmatrāta 菩提達摩多羅." Furthermore, the *Lidai fabao ji* interpolates the patriarchs Śaṇavāsa and Upagupta in between Siṁha and "Śubhamitra," making for a total of twenty-nine Indian patriarchs. As noted, Śaṇavāsa 舍那婆斯 and Upagupta 優婆掘 are the fourth and fifth figures in the *Aśokarājasūtra* account of the initial transmissions and occur as sequential figures in Buddhabhadra's list, occurring immediately before his own Kashmiri lineage represented by Vasumitra -- Saṅgharakṣa -- Dharmatrāta. However, in their own list the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s distinguish the traditional fourth and fifth Indian patriarchs Śaṇavāsa 商那和修 and Upagupta 優波掬多 from the newly-minted twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Śaṇavāsa 舍那婆斯 and Upagupta 優婆掘 by using alternative transliterations.[174]

The *Baolin zhuan* list of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs was to become the standard version, and its author duplicates most of the *Lidai fabao ji* list but substitutes three other names from Sengyou's Sarvāstivāda list after Siṁha and ends with Bodhidharma. The *Lidai fabao ji* list was thus a key source for the later canonical version of the Chan lineage. In the final analysis, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s appear to have drawn from Shenhui's ideology and his list, Buddhabhadra's tradition linking the Indian and Kashmiri

[173] For Shenhui's version of the Indian patriarchs, see Hu Shih [1930] 1970: 179. In spite of the use made of it, the *Aśokarājasūtra* is not a generational lineage as conceived by sixth century Chinese exegetes such as Guanding or the unknown author of the *Fu fazang zhuan*, for the first two figures Mahākāśapa 摩訶迦葉 and Ānanda 阿難 are both presented as disciples of the Buddha, although Ānanda does succeed Mahākāśapa in authority. Likewise the third and fourth figures Madhyāntika 末田地 and Śaṇavāsa 舍那婆斯 are both presented as disciples of Ānanda, and Śaṇavāsa transmits the Dharma to the fifth figure, Upagupta 優婆掘. Following the *Aśokarājasūtra*, the *Fu fazang zhuan* retains Madhyāntika as a co-disciple to Śaṇavāsa, but Shenhui, who was probably following Buddhabhadra's list, has Madhyāntika as the third Indian patriarch. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s follow Shenhui's sequential presentation of the first five, and then add the rest of the *Fu fazang zhuan* list.

[174] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 180a16-b15.

masters, and the *Fu fazang zhuan* list without its ideology.

The *Fu fazang zhuan* plays upon "decline of the Dharma" sensibilities in order to make an appeal for greater effort, with the aid of certain rhetorical flourishes. For example, there is an episode in the *Aśokarājasūtra* in which Ānanda's words are disregarded by a younger monk because his teacher has told him that Ānanda is senile. This is followed by Ānanda's reflection that although no one alive now has the authority to rebuke that monk's teacher, nevertheless "by the power of the Buddha, the Dharma will abide for one thousand years." Ānanda then follows his departed co-disciples into nirvāṇa.[175] However, in the *Fu fazang zhuan* version Ānanda is not so complacent. He embarks upon extended lamentations over how the world will be sunk in misery for countless eons and dwells on the corruption of all things, ending like a tragedian with the query, "Why should I long linger in the present [degenerate circumstances]?"[176]

Following the narrative of Siṁha's death, the *Fu fazang zhuan*'s final exhortations urge that the Dharma must be maintained and protected ever more diligently, precisely because the world has gone dark with the ending of the lineage of the Buddha's disciples. The universal efficacy of the Buddha-Dharma and the importance of revering the Saṅgha are evoked by such stories as that of an elephant whose blood-lust is tamed by the chanting of the monks from a nearby monastery.[177]

The sensibilities that shaped the *Fu fazang zhuan* could thus conceive the continuity of the Dharma, though weakened, through preservation of the formal practices and traditional roles of the Saṅgha. As discussed in the context of Buddhist criteria of authority, this reflects a long-standing tendency to rely on orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy as the basis for continued viability of the Dharma. In marked contrast, eighth

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175 *Ayu wang jing*, *T.* 50 (2043) 154c-155a. Li, trans., 1993: 115-117.

176 *Fu fazang zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2058) 302c2-303a7.

177 *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2058) 321c20-322b28.

century Chan sectarians' increasing ideological dependence on lineage as the source of continuity made the *Fu fazang zhuan* account difficult either to ignore or to accept unaltered. The story of how the peerless lineage was saved from extinction begged to be told, just as traditional Buddhism's wanton extinction of fully realized arhats had begged for the resuscitating doctrine of the bodhisattva path. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' oft-cited freedom with sources qualified them well for the task. They incorporated the *Fu fazang zhuan* lineage of names and included the story of the martyrdom of Siṁha, but claimed that transmission was accomplished before Siṁha's death.

> Siṁhabikṣu had transmitted [the Dharma] to Śaṇavāsa, and so he went from Central India to Kashmir. The king there was named Mihirakula 彌多羅掘.[178] This king did not believe in the Buddha-Dharma. He destroyed stūpas, demolished monasteries and slaughtered sentient beings to serve the two heretics Moman 末曼 and Mishihe 彌師訶. At that time Siṁhabikṣu purposely came to convert this kingdom, and the pathless king with his own hands took up a sharp double-edged sword and swore an oath: "If you are a sage, the [other] masters must suffer punishment." Siṁhabikṣu then manifested a form whereby his body bled white milk. Moman and Mishihe were executed like common men, and their blood spattered over the ground. The king resolved to take refuge in the Buddha, and he ordered the disciple of Siṁhabikṣu (the Dharma had already been transmitted to Śaṇavāsa) to enter South India to preach extensively and liberate beings.[179]

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[178] Mihirakula was the second ruler of the conquering Hūṇa people (related to the Hepthalites) who ruled northwest India and Kashmir from the end of the fifth century and well into the sixth. The exceptional cruelty of this ruler and his known persecution of Buddhists has led to speculation that his reign, and the consequent exodus of monks, may have been responsible for the late sixth century development of the "decline of the Dharma" theme in China. Nattier argues that while this may have been a factor, the literature of decline is also strongly associated with the very prosperity of the Saṅgha during the peaceful Kushan rule of the second and third centuries. See Nattier 1991: 110-117; 224-227. If the "Miduoluojue" 彌多羅掘 of the *Fufazang zhuan* is indeed Mihirakula, then this is another indication of its sixth century origins.

[179] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 180a29-b9.

In the *Fu fazang zhuan* there is no mention of the heretic masters and no conversion of the king. The martyrdom is summary and graphic: the king beheads Siṁha, and the story ends thus: "in his head there was no blood, only milk flowed out. The persons who had transmitted the Dharma one to the other were in this manner severed."[180] In contrast, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s appear to have been somewhat anxious to make their main point, repeating that the transmission had already passed to Śaṇavāsa.

I would like to underscore the usefulness of the *Fu fazang zhuan*, with or without emendation, to those who were engaged in streamlining the Dharma in the sixth and seventh centuries. We have reviewed the fifth century proliferation of different prescriptions for transmission of the bodhisattva precepts, coupled with an increasingly pragmatic and yet also visionary tendency. In the context of the text reception of a "good sign" was treated as a distinction which separated the worthy from the unworthy, but in practice this opened a gap through which the subjective experience of the recipient could enter into the validation of transmission.[181] In the fifth century the precepts, as talismanic repositories of Buddhist teachings and practices, came to be generated and circulated beyond the bounds of the Saṅgha. The permeability and vulnerability of the Saṅgha became thereby more noticeable, and more problematic.

In the conclusion of his article on the *Fu fazang zhuan*, Maspero draws attention to the bewildering variety of the traditions of affiliation that were floating around the Buddhist world by the middle of the sixth century, and he suggests that the *Fu fazang zhuan* compiler was motivated by the same spirit that compelled Sengyou to draw up his

[180] *Fu fazang zhuan T.* 50 (2058) 321c14-18.

[181] One could say that self-empowerment and empowerment by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas came to overlap more and more until unified into a single focus in the eighth century, and it was this unified field which, paradoxically or inevitably, allowed for the mutually differential self-definitions of Chan and Pure Land.

lists of Sarvāstivāda masters.[182] The increase of such systematizing and defining ventures suggests the underlying turbulence and multiplicity of the currents of Buddhist practice and doctrine. Historical studies of Chinese Buddhism that demonstrate "fifth century proliferation and sixth century systematization" or "the sixth century blending of the trends of southern exegesis and northern practice" are very useful up to a certain point, but these broad characterizations cannot capture the complex interplay of such factors as the periodic diaspora from urban centers of Buddhism destroyed by war, the continuing efforts to assimilate new translations, the competitive interaction with indigenous local traditions and innovations, and the effects of success.

The *Fu fazang zhuan* has been linked by tradition to the post-persecution anxieties of the Northern Wei clergy. However, in Wei Shou's account, what is most noticeable about the post-persecution clergy is not their anxiety but their populist piety and energy. Tanyao was the successful engineer of the first Buddhist state in China, a state that poor and rich alike seem to have contributed generously to build -- at least in the beginning. If the *Fu fazang zhuan* is indeed a sixth century work, it may speak instead to anxieties about the price of success, calculated in such coin as the destruction of the glorious temples of Luoyang and the Buddhist-inspired excesses of Emperor Wu 武 (r. 502-549) of the Liang 梁. The implicit message of the *Fu fazang zhuan* is that the true current of transmission runs in a narrow and deep channel, encompassing the paradox of its destructible human vessels and its perpetual pure nourishment, a stream of milk running in the veins of the ordained and preordained. In this light, consider the following episode from the *Fu fazang zhuan* account of the sixteenth master Saṅghanandi 僧伽難提:

> Once there was an arhat who had cast aside the heavy burden [of karmic residue] and fulfilled all meritorious virtues. Saṅghanandi wanted

[182] Maspero 1911: 149.

> to test him, so he expounded a gāthā and questioned him: "'Born among the wheel-turning kind, not a Buddha, not an arhat, not receiving a subsequent existence, and also not a pratyekabuddha.' Bhadanta, you must examine and investigate well -- what sort of thing is like that which I have spoken?"
>
> Then the arhat entered samādhi. He examined and meditated deeply but was unable to comprehend. So he used his spiritual power to divide his body, flew to Tuṣita Heaven and reached Maitreya's place. He fully laid out the matter as above, and asked [Maitreya] to resolve his doubts. Maitreya told the arhat, "In the world one takes a lump of clay and puts it on a wheel. Working it by hand, it becomes an earthen vessel. Such an earthen vessel [is] like the holy ones, how could it have a subsequent [existence]? At that, the arhat understood. He returned to Jambudvīpa and expounded this matter. Saṅghanandi said, "Bhadanta, this must be understanding [reached] after Maitreya Bodhisattva expounded it for you. Wisdom like this is [merely] the transformations of spiritual powers. To save the many beings, one cannot be [so] limited."[183]

Saṅghanandi then "desired to abandon his body," and so he grasped the branch of a tree and died standing upright. His disciples wanted to lay his body on a cremation pyre, but it was absolutely immovable even with the help of large white elephants. Finally they burned him where he stood, and although his body was consumed the tree was unhurt. The contrast with the arhat's superficial metamorphoses is emphasized: "[Saṅghanandi's] spiritual power was exhausted [with physical death], but still [there remained] the characteristic of the unchanging."[184]

Here, may it be noted, are several elements that will become important in the Chan patriarchal ethos -- the devaluation of merely expedient spiritual powers, the perpetuity of the "wheel-turning" transmission of the Buddha, and the play upon the notion of Dharma as both function and essence, impermanent vessel and empty container. Moreover, the

[183] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2058) 320a3-16.

[184] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2058) 320a16-22.

third Patriarch Sengcan 僧璨 (d. *ca.* 606), the cipher who stands between Huike 慧可 (487-593) of the sixth century Laṅkā School and Daoxin 道信 (580-651) of the seventh century East Mountain tradition, is given the same upright death as his half-namesake Saṅghanandi, holding fast to the branch of a tree.[185]

I would argue that the *Fu fazang zhuan* is one of the voices in the arguments of renegotiation over the relative identities of lay and ordained. The criteria of legitimate transmission of the Dharma as having its basis in the condition of the ordained had been steadily weakened in the course of the fifth and early sixth centuries. This was due in part to the expansion of the territory of orthopraxy through the accessibility of bodhisattva precepts ordination and the resultant blurring of boundaries. It was due also to the cults of Maitreya and Amitābha, which provided direct channels of appeal for the lay devotee and bypassed the mediation of the clergy. Finally, it was due to the cheapening effects of over-production, as seen in such phenomena as private ordinations and evidenced by increasing popular resentment of the economic burden of the clergy. Retreat to the fortress of strict observance of the "śrāvaka" Vinaya was an expedient but unsatisfactory fallback position. It was unsatisfactory both because of "Hīnayāna" associations and also because of the frustrating difficulties of regulating such a diverse, populous, and amorphous body as the Saṅgha had become. Under these circumstances, it was necessary to find better means of separating the rich taste of the *crème de la crème* of Dharma transmission from the expensive tastes of its overweight clergy.

As we shall see in the next chapter, this concern for a separation of the stream of true Dharma transmission from the flood of mere ordination is one of the formative principles of the current that became known as the Chan school. The latter part of the sixth century and the seventh century saw an acceleration of trends already established in the fifth, as well as new manifestations of the tension between inclusive and exclusive tendencies in

[185] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 181c4-6.

Dharma and Saṅgha.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ROBES, PLATFORMS, AND PATRIARCHS

> A word of praise is comparable to bestowing a princely robe; a word of blame is as severe as capital punishment.
>
> — Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Chunqiu zhengyi* [1]

> Dignity, and even holiness too, sometimes, are more questions of coat and waistcoat than some people imagine.
>
> --- Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

In this chapter the broad theme of Dharma-transmission seen within the context of relations between Saṅgha and state continues with narrowed scope, as we turn now to issues of particular importance for that much-debated entity, the Chan school. As noted in John McRae's review of the field of Chinese Buddhism in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, the last decade has seen a great proliferation of western language studies on the formative period of Chan.[2] In light of the extremely valuable work that has already been done, let me here outline the topics that I will be taking up in this chapter.

My primary focus is the increasingly precise articulation of Chan lineage and transmission discourse within the context of court-clergy relations. As an important corollary to Chan transmission issues I will discuss developments in ordination and precepts-transmission. I will briefly review the competing lineages and transmission schemes advanced by the various "proto-Chan" schools and will touch upon the Southern School-Northern School opposition, but for in-depth coverage of these topics I will refer

[1] Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648), preface to his *Chunqiu zhengyi* 春秋正義 (Spring and Autumn Annals Commentary).

[2] McRae 1995.

the reader to the relevant Japanese and Western scholarship of recent decades.

In working with the *Lidai fabao ji* version of the patriarchy, I discuss Bodhidharma and Huike in some detail in this chapter and emphasize the Wuxiang-Wuzhu transmission in the next chapter. In the last part of this chapter I will focus on the notorious passage in which Empress Wu Zetian gives Huineng's robe to Zhishen. These choices are based on my perception that these were the most creative areas in the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' account of their lineage, while their treatment of other patriarchal transmissions differs relatively little from versions found in other works.

Shenhui 神會 (684-758) plays a major role in this chapter. He appears as a radical reformer, it must be admitted, but not wearing the garb of an indigenous rationalist in which Hu Shih clothed him. Shenhui is a curiously compelling figure for modern Chan scholars and has been presented in a variety of different aspects since Hu Shih's discovery of some of the Dunhuang manuscripts of his works. The ambivalence with which he is presented here is in part a reflection of the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' ambivalence -- they borrowed heavily from him but did not include him in their lineage. My view of Shenhui is also influenced by the critique of him implicit in Faure's critique of Chan rhetoric.

I consider myself most indebted to Bernard Faure, but perhaps I should not follow his example so far as to say that he should be held partially responsible for what follows.[3] His insights into the uses and paradoxes of the Chan "rhetoric of immediacy" are indeed the conceptual underpinnings for this chapter. At the same time, I am setting off in a different direction, no doubt mostly backwards. I see myself simplifying and historicizing Faure's disquisition on the rhetorical erasure of the middle ground in Chan theory and (theoretically) practice. I am thereby falling back into all the transferentially-teleological and objectivist-ironical pitfalls that Faure attempted to avoid through his

[3] See Faure 1991: xi-xii.

balletic oscillations and grand sweeps across time and space. I know I am more appreciative than the quail in the *Zhuangzi* who said "Where does he think he's going?" upon seeing the Peng bird pass far overhead. Nevertheless, I too seem to prefer the tangled underbrush.

A note on use of the term "Chan" -- I realize that there is a certain animus against using "Chan" to refer to a distinct school prior to the ninth century. I certainly view eighth century "golden-age" Chan as a retrospective illusion, yet perhaps we might also question the opposing image of Chan sectarianism as adventitious rhetorical dust on the clear mirror of pan-Buddhist institutional cohesion. The vision of eighth century Buddhism that I incline to instead is that of an increasing number of movements struggling to embody a "true" Saṅgha within and yet also aloof from the burgeoning *de facto* Saṅgha. The separation at this time of Chan, Tiantai, Pure Land, Hua Yan and Tantric schools may indeed have been largely retrospective and rhetorical, but I believe these convulsions of separation gained force in tandem with a very basic and real problem -- the inability of any institution, secular or religious, to control the Buddhist clergy.

<u>Bodhidharma and Huike in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*</u>

The figure of the Chan founding patriarch Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 (d. *ca.* 530) has been a protean source of inspiration in Chan/Zen literature and art through the centuries. Modern studies have attempted to clarify the line between hagiographical and historical accounts, but Faure, as one of the more recent commentators upon the Bodhidharma legend, raises doubts about such an approach:

> Bodhidharma's biography is very obscure, yet his life is relatively well known. This is less paradoxical than it may sound. I shall argue that hagiography flourishes precisely owing to the scarcity of historical materials.

> The main task of the historians, usually, is to try to uncover the facts behind the legend. The texts concerning Bodhidharma are considered by historians as documents that need to be interpreted using the historical method so as to try to bring to light their hidden truths. Often enough, after this mortuary washing, only a skeleton remains, and it is this skeleton that will enter the museum of history. In fact, some missing bones may have to be taken from another skeleton to complete the exhibit. Indeed, though some may consider biography the opposite of hagiography, the biographical process is in most cases only an unconscious duplication of the hagiographical process.[4]

Modern scholarship has produced several skeletons of Bodhidharma's teachings and activities in China, and as these have been sufficiently represented in Western languages I will not give another doctrinal and biographical sketch here.[5] The insights of the essay cited above, "Bodhidharma as a Textual and Religious Paradigm," allow us to see some of the forces that shaped these composite and yet ineluctably fragmented remains. As a paradigm, a heuristic construct, Bodhidharma also becomes a kind of Frankenstein's monster, defined in opposition to an "other" and created by assimilation of the parts of many.

The heuristically emphasized "other" that I wish to pose against the figure of Bodhidharma is, precisely, the many. In other words, I suggest that Bodhidharma the ascetic meditator was a figure etched against a background of the shadowy ranks of the expediently ordained. However various the accounts of Bodhidharma's origins and character, all versions connect him with Luoyang in the second or third decades of the sixth century.

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[4] Faure 1986b: 188.

[5] Japanese studies include Sekiguchi 1957 and Yanagida 1967, 1969a, and forthcoming. Studies in Western languages include Broughton, unpublished, "Proto-Chan Texts"; Jorgensen 1979; Dumoulin 1988: 85-106; Faure 1986a; and McRae 1986: 15-29.

The Buddhist scholar and visionary Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) has bequeathed to us a sense that the sixth century brought forth figures with clear outlines. One must ask, were the contrasts so apparent in the sixth century or only from a distance, is the classical symmetry traced from the past or imparted by Daoxuan's hand? The figures I have introduced thus far -- monks such as Fotudeng, Daoan, Buddhabhadra, Kumārajīva, Huiyuan and Dharmakṣema -- were tagged in Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* with certain primary attributes such as thaumaturge, exegete, or translator, but their hagiographies attribute to them a wealth of functions rather than an essence.

Daoxuan has a number of biographies of monks active in the Northern Wei, including Bodhidharma, in his *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks), *T.* 50 (2060), first completed in 649. Daoxuan's biases are a complex subject, for he was writing from the perspective of the Sui-Tang transition in the first half of the seventh century. Among Buddhists this was a period of intensifying sectarian consciousness, and Daoxuan himself was later considered to be the founding advocate of the Chinese Dharmagupta Vinaya school.

During Daoxuan's lifetime, the piety of Emperor Wen 文 of the Sui 隋 (r. 581-604), who had supported Buddhist projects and removed all restrictions on ordination, was succeeded by grudging and critical tolerance from the Li 李 clan that established the Tang 唐 dynasty in 618. The educated clergy then had to negotiate ground that was somewhere in between an imperial house more inclined to favor Daoists and Confucians, and the less discriminating vitality (and generosity) of lay Buddhists on all levels of society. Some, such as the monk Falin 法琳 (572-640), vigorously entered into polemics in defense of their creed.[6]

Precision regarding doctrinal identity was perhaps in part a reflex defence against the

[6] Sengyou's *Hongming ji* 弘明集 and Daoxuan's *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, *T.* 52 (2103), are large compendia of Six Dynasties, Sui and early Tang Buddhist apologia; for Falin's treatises, see *ibid.*, *T.* 52 (2103) 160-168, and his *Poxie lun* 破邪論 and *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論, *T.* 52 (2109) & (2120).

attacks of non-Buddhists and was further stimulated by competition among Buddhists to meet the exacting standards demanded in return for imperial favor. The project of classification of different teachings had been given its most comprehensive treatment to date in Zhiyi's massive *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (Great Cessation and Insight), *T.* 46 (1911), but in the early Tang the Tiantai school itself was under a cloud due to its former close association with the Sui rulers. In the Tang, demarcation among Buddhist "schools" with established links to the pre-Sui past afforded political correctness and respectability by mirroring the structure of sanctioned clan affiliation, and it distinguished well-connected and seriously-minded clergy from the elusive irregulars of the roads, villages, and remote monasteries.[7]

This situation is reflected in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*. The typological organizing principle inherited from Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* became with Daoxuan such a finely honed instrument that he sometimes divided one monk into two, based on his assumptions about exclusive trends in practice and doctrinal affiliation.[8] Consciousness of "dhyāna-practitioners" as a significant development has been attributed to Daoxuan's expansion of this category of biographies in later drafts of his work, which he continued to add to until his death.[9] Subtly unlike the samādhi virtuosi associated with dhyāna-practice in an earlier era, the meditators praised in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* established the coalescence of a breed set apart, a pool of candidates for later Chan affiliates seeking ancestors in the sixth century. There was as yet no comprehensive Chan lineage, but Daoxuan noted master-disciple relationships, inviting those who came later to try to

[7] For greater detail regarding the Sui-Tang transition and Buddhism, see Boodberg [1938-39] 1979: 265-349; Wright 1973: 239-263; Weinstein 1973 & 1987a: 3-37; Twitchett, ed., 1979.

[8] Wright has shown that Huijiao did the same, but in Huijiao's case the bisection was due to political and geographical factors, when a northern monk took a different Dharma-name after fleeing to the southern court. See Wright 1957.

[9] See Yanagida 1967: 7-11.

connect the lines between the clusters of dots. Even though the finds at Dunhuang have reoriented our understanding of early Chan it is important to realize that a great many Chan Dunhuang texts rely significantly on the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.

In Buddhist lore of the Six Dynasties period the tendencies that Daoxuan began to distinguish had been seen as mutually reinforcing: translators were known for magical powers, acts of piety and extreme ascesis went hand-in-hand, and a monk could be both a master of Vinaya and of dhyāna. However, in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Ratnamati 勒那摩提 appears as a translator at Yongning Monastery in Bodhiruci's 菩提流支 biography, but there is a separate biography for his *doppelgänger* Ratnamati 勒那漫提 the thaumaturge who wields a variety of miraculous powers at the same monastery in the same period.[10]

Miraculous powers were by no means devalued -- on the contrary, Daoxuan held that miracles are the way in which the Dharma is made manifest.[11] Arguing against yet another imperial attempt to require monks and nuns to bow to the emperor, Daoxuan defended the special status of the clergy with an account of miraculous events in the history of Buddhism in China.[12] He assiduously collected and compiled miracle stories, especially towards the end of his life. Koichi Shinohara, following up on Yanagida Seizan's observations, argues that Daoxuan's collections of miracle stories and his concentration on the Chan section of the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* reflected and further solidified sectarian tendencies in Buddhist hagiography.[13] Biographical collections of both thaumaturges and of Chan masters were to become detached from their common origins in the topological *Gaoseng zhuan* genre and were to go their separate ways.

[10] Compare *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T*. 50 (2060) 429a5-9 & 644a13-b24.

[11] *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄, *T*. 52 (2106) 423a18-19.

[12] *Guang hongming ji*, *T*. 52 (2103) 284c-286b. See Weinstein 1987: 32-33.

[13] Shinohara 1991: 83.

Perhaps protesting too much, the later Chan school would emphasize that the ways were very separate indeed.

Daoxuan draws no connection between Bodhidharma and the dhyāna master "Dharma 達摩" who appears as an early teacher of the Liang monk Sengfu 僧副 (464-524) and is said to be skilled in contemplation practice (*guanxing* 觀行).[14] Although the two references occur close together at the beginning of the fascicle devoted to fifth and sixth century practitioners, apparently for Daoxuan Bodhidharma was in a special category not to be associated with mere contemplation exercises. Bodhidharma's biography has a much more elaborate discussion of his teachings and identifies his hallmark practice as "wall-contemplation" (*biguan* 壁觀), an embodiment of the realization of the principle of non-dual true nature, which is reinforced with four concrete methods or practices that actualize realization.[15]

The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography thus contains a summary of the treatise that is most reliably purported to give an account of the teachings of Bodhidharma, the so-called *Erru sixing lun* 而入四行論 (Treatise on the Two Entrances and Four Practices).[16] Dunhuang fragments of this text predate the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography; however, Daoxuan's biographical information does not tally with the nearly contemporary biographical information on Bodhidharma found in Tanlin's 曇林 (*ca.* 506-574) preface to the *Erru sixing lun*. Tanlin's preface claims that Bodhidharma was from the northwest of India and arrived in China via Central Asia, which is supported by a passage in the *Luoyang qielan ji*. The *Xu gaoseng zhuan* has it that Bodhidharma was from southern India and arrived by sea in southern China, and this latter version became the standard one.

[14] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 550b3-4.

[15] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 551b27-c26.

[16] Korean edition in the *Chanmen cuoyao* 禪門撮要 published in 1908; Beijing 919; S. 2715; S. 3375; P. 3018; P. 4634; P. 2923; S. 7519; P. 4795. For annotated Japanese translation and collated edition of the first six texts, see Yanagida 1969.

Nevertheless, in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* Bodhidharma is an insubstantial figure when contrasted to the extensive material on his famous near-contemporary centered at Yongning Monastery in Luoyang, the translator Bodhiruci (d. 527), mentioned above. Bodhiruci and his disciples formed the nucleus of a group sponsored by the Northern Wei court for the translation and study of new Yogācāra and Pure Land-related scriptures, and he was later designated the founder of the Dilun 地論 (Daśabhūmivyākhyāna) School.

In Bodhidharma's own league, the career of another contemporary, the meditator-monk Buddha 佛陀, is also easier to trace than that of the future Chan patriarch. Well before the Northern Wei court moved to Luoyang, nearby Songshan 嵩山 had attracted ascetic dhyāna practitioners, and it may have also served as a refuge during Emperor Taiwu's persecution. Emperor Xiaowen revered the western monk known as Buddha, or Bhadra 跋陀, who accompanied the imperial household from Pingcheng to Luoyang. Buddha took up residence on Songshan in a temple the Emperor built for him, which later became Shaolin 少林 Monastery, the primary site of the Bodhidharma legend.[17] Faure has followed the lines of the complex web in which the names Bodhidharma, Bodhiruci, Buddhabhadra, Buddha or Bhadra, and Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394-468) link, cross, and are transposed throughout the early Chan tradition. Tangled in this web are variant master-disciple relationships and the rival traditions of transmission of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* -- the many "doubles" whose traces collectively contributed to the oppositional composition of the Chan founding patriarch Bodhidharma.[18]

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[17] See *Shilao zhi*, Hurvitz, trans., 1956: 82; *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 551a21-b26.

[18] See Faure 1986: 195-196. Transmission of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (Scripture of the *Āvatārs* of Laṅka) was one of Bodhidharma's distinguishing characteristics, but the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s take great pains to distinguish Bodhidharma's transmission from mere translations of the text, specifically those by Guṇabhadra [completed in 443, *Lengqie'abaduoluobao jing* 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經, *T.* 16 (670)]; Bodhiruci [completed in 513, Ru Lengqie jing 入楞伽經, *T.* 16 (671)]; and Śikṣānanda [completed *ca.* 704, *Dasheng ru Lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽經, *T.* 16 (672)]. *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 180b16-c2. In a subsequent section of this chapter there will be further discussion of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* transmission and early Chan.

Yanagida suggests that when we trace connections such as the link later forged between Bodhidharma and Songshan, Bodhidharma's brief appearance in the *Luoyang qielan ji* at Yongning Monastery, his biographer-disciple Tanlin's clerical duties and connections at the Northern Wei court, and the pervasive largesse of Emperor Xiaowen and Empress Ling, we get a pattern-image of Bodhidharma very similar to that of Buddha, the image of a mountain ascetic supported at a benevolent distance by imperial patronage.[19] The paradigmatic opposition between the pure ascetics of the mountains who lived only on pine-needles and the compromised court exegetes may not entirely reflect economic reality. Yet Daoxuan's biographies of Bodhidharma and Huike do offer a subtly different image from that of the imperially-supported ascetic. This is the image of an individual ascetic who sometimes joined with others in small temporary groups, seldom stayed long at any particular location, was weather-beaten but not unlearned, and occasionally suffered persecution both from monks more firmly allied with the system and from fellow-vagrants even further beyond the pale. Significantly, this individual ascetic could be a layperson as well as a monk.[20]

One might note the emphasis on attaining toughness and endurance, a distinctly "gradual" process, in the metaphor of the clay vessel in Huike's 慧可 (487-593) biography. Huike is likened to a potter who must rid the clay of impurities in order to produce a vessel of a strength and hardness that will not be "shattered by conditions."[21] This is quite different from the metaphor's import in the previously quoted *Fu fazang zhuan* account of Saṅghanandi's riddle in which the holy ones, like clay vessels, are continually turned on the wheel of the Dharma and have no subsequent existence. In the

[19] Yanagida, forthcoming, p. 24.

[20] See, for example, the reference to Layman Xiang 向 in the biography of Huike: *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552a27-b7.

[21] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552a6-7.

*Fu fazang zhuan* the transmission after the first five figures is accomplished through a series of relatively featureless vessels. The replicability of these "response-bodies" of the Dharma can be contrasted to the heightened sense of individuality that is conveyed through Daoxuan's biographies.

With the fall of the Northern Wei in 534, many monks followed Emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (r. 532-534) and the Gao高 clan to form the Western Wei 西魏 dynasty (535-556) at Ye 鄴 in the east. Here Bodhiruci's heirs regrouped and resumed translation and Dilun studies. Yanagida surmises that our shadow-image Bodhidharma, as documented in the case of Tanlin and Huike, may have also gone to Ye after the split-up of the dynasty.[22] Although Bodhidharma's *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography notes only his activities in the Northern Wei, in the beginning of the fascicle he is identified, like Huike, with the period of the Northern Qi 北齊 dynasty (550-565) at Ye. In Huike's biography Bodhidharma is said to have died on the banks of the Luo river (from which Luoyang derives its name) before Huike went to Ye.[23]

Contradictions abound in material about Bodhidharma, but the confusion itself offers valuable clues. Yanagida draws an intriguing connection between the fragmentation of the Northern Wei in the mid-sixth century and the themes of ignoring slander and abuse, dealing with hardship, and the evanescence of honor and fortune emphasized in Bodhidharma's teaching of the "four practices."[24] Huike's biography contains even more specific accounts of slanderous attacks and nearly lethal jealousy.[25] These are perennial Buddhist themes, of course. Yet one might well imagine that the teeming "altar-rats of the Law" fleeing Luoyang were hard put to find enough new granaries to accommodate

[22] Yanagida, forthcoming, p. 24.

[23] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 550a10; 552a7.

[24] Yanagida, forthcoming, p. 24.

[25] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552a11-23.

them all.

Buddhism did continue to flourish in Changan in the early years of the Northern Zhou 北周 (557-581). However, anti-Buddhist memorials submitted during the economic disruption of rebuilding the capital goaded the Northern Zhou Emperor Wu 武 (r. 561-578) into a persecution of Buddhism that lasted from 574 to 578. Emperor Wu's death in 578 prompted further tales of karmic retribution, but the fortunes of Buddhism were not improved by the parody of restoration launched by Wu's deranged son, Emperor Xuan 宣 (r. 578-579).[26] North and south were finally reunified under the Sui in 589, presenting the Saṅgha with new opportunities and difficulties.

Another of Bodhidharma's doubles stands out amidst the political chaos of the mid-sixth century, namely the monk Sengchou 僧稠 (480-560). Sengchou studied dhyāna at Luoyang and was affiliated with Buddha's disciples on Mt. Song at the end of the Northern Wei. He later became prominent at the court of the Northern Zhou's rival, the aforementioned Northern Qi dynasty at Ye. There are a number of hagiographical motifs that Bodhidharma and Sengchou share. Daoxuan contrasts the two in his overview of dhyāna trends but considers the aspects they represent to be complementary, like the two axles of a carriage. Sengchou's "abiding in mindfulness" is characterized as pure, venerable, and readily apparent; whereas Bodhidharma's "doctrine of emptiness" is characterized as mysterious, abstruse and difficult to penetrate.[27] What Daoxuan presents as complementarity hinges upon some of the same principles that would later be reified as the opposition between "gradual" and "sudden" teachings. Seen from a distance, however, traces of the teachings and connections of the two monks appear rather similar.[28]

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[26] Jorgensen 1979: 39-42.

[27] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 596c8-16.

[28] There is an extant work attributed to Sengchou, the *Dasheng xinxing lun* 大乘心行論 (Treatise on

Faure has analyzed the two as "symmetrical figures that imply each other." He argues that both their polarization and amalgamation were functions of the nascent consciousness of Chan as a distinct entity. The two monks become a dual subject, the two masks of an ambivalence that either may assume. Faure says: "Thus, Seng-chou appears as the main double of Bodhidharma: on the syntagmatic axis of the hagiographical narrative, he is a rival, on its paradigmatic axis, he is a substitute."[29]

This principle is graphically illustrated in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Huike, in which he is paired and opposed with Tanlin, a lecturer in Bodhiruci's circle. Unlike the later Chan legend in which Huike cuts off his own arm, in Daoxuan's version Huike and Tanlin both lose an arm involuntarily to bandits and Huike's stoicism is juxtaposed with Tanlin's pitiful screaming. Huike helps Tanlin, but with the authority of a shared handicap he also tells him to help himself. Their experience serves as a bond, and they are said to have understood and appreciated each other.[30] Thus they are shown as physical twins and mutually dependent spiritual opposites.

In examining how these paradigmatic pairings were formed, one might also consider the ways in which hagiographical careers were affected by posthumous perceptions of a monk's political connections or lack thereof. Sengchou was indisputably an eminent monk honored by the ruling Gao clan of the Northern Qi. In contrast, Daoxuan praises Bodhidharma for "abandoning affiliation with both blame and blessing."[31] On the other hand, Daoxuan praises both Sengchou and Sengshi 僧實, a monk prominent in the Northern Zhou, for "following precedent and transmitting the lamp [so that] the current of transformative [preaching] would not cease." Again on the other hand, they are

the Mind-Practice of the Mahāyāna) P. 3559. For a comparison between this work and Bodhidharma's *Erru sixing lun*, see Yanagida, forthcoming, p. 36-39. For discussion of the philosophical trends associated with Sengchou and Bodhidharma, see Tang [1938] 1991: 782-787. For a discussion of Sengchou's method of dhyāna, see Jan Yün-hua 1983: 51-63.

[29] Faure 1986: 192-194.

[30] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552b22-29.

praised for abandoning worldly honor and returning to the wilds.[32] Even so, their paths are well-lit and well-placed when compared with the elusive Bodhidharma. By these polarizations within polarizations Daoxuan tries to draw the fine line between simple cultivation and the simply uncultivated. Beyond the pale are other so-called dhyāna practitioners, those without learning who "count robes received and food begged, [such that] calculation is taken to be the Mind-Way."[33]

Bodhidharma, a kind of hagiographic anti-matter, emerges from the darkness between brighter stars that shone briefly before the dawn of the Sui-Tang reunification and then were absorbed. By the eighth century, what Bodhidharma was *not* caused him to stand out -- he was not a court translator like Bodhiruci or his double in the south, Guṇabhadra. He was not a prestigious imperially-supported ascetic like Buddha. He was not respected and honored like Sengchou. Likewise, Tanlin was more court-tainted than his persecuted fellow-disciple Huike. For the time being, I will bracket the process by which these figures materialized from obscurity and proceed to examine Bodhidharma and Huike as fully-formed Chan patriarchs in the *Lidai fabao ji*.

## Bodhidharma and Huike in the *Lidai fabao ji*

As noted, the Bao Tang founder Wuzhu's signature teaching was that of the formless precepts -- nothing was to be set apart as Buddhist practice and yet nothing was not Buddhist practice. The second half of the *Lidai fabao ji* reinforces this message with numerous stories of encounters between Wuzhu and his patrons and rivals that showcase his uncompromising attitude. It seems that Wuzhu's followers did achieve some measure of success in living up (or down) to this standard. According to the Bao Tang's ninth century critic Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), the Bao Tang were notorious for not maintaining

[31] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 596c11.

[32] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 596c5-7.

any monastic observances or even basic etiquette and for tonsuring and conferring robes on people without requiring of them any evidence of Buddhist practice.[34] Given this radical de-signification of the monastic robe, it becomes all the more surprising that the plot of the first half of the *Lidai fabao ji* should revolve so fixedly upon the story of how Bodhidharma's robe came into Wuzhu's possession. Or is it surprising, after all?

In order to elucidate this apparent paradox, let us consider several passages from the *Lidai fabao ji* biographies of Bodhidharma and Huike. These passages concern Bodhidharma's encounter with Emperor Wu 武 (r. 502-549) of the Liang 梁, his acceptance of Huike as his disciple, and his deathbed transmission of his robe to Huike.

The meeting with Emperor Wu is quite a famous anecdote in the annals of Chan, probably originating with Shenhui and intended as a criticism of "Northern School" style Buddhism.[35] In the *Lidai fabao ji*, the imperial audience takes place when Bodhidharma disembarks from the ship that has brought him to China:

> Emperor Wu of the Liang came out of the city personally to welcome him, and had him ascend to his residence hall. The emperor asked him, "What teachings to convert beings has the Venerable brought from the other country?" The Great Master Bodhidharma replied, "I have not brought a single word." The emperor asked, "What merit have We gained in building monasteries and saving people, copying scriptures and casting statues?" The Great Master responded, "No merit whatsoever. This is

[33] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 597a25-26.

[34] Zongmi's critique occurs in his summary and evaluation of the different Chan schools of his day. He first describes Bao Tang ordination and practices, or rather lack thereof, and characterizes the Bao Tang as a school that preaches "extinguishing consciousness" (*mieshi* 滅識). *Yuanjue jing dashu chao* 圓覺經大疏鈔 (Subcommentary to the Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment), *ZZ.* vol. 14: 278d. See Kamata 1971: 306-307. The Bao Tang school is then included in Zongmi's more extensive criticism of the nihilistic and antinomian tendencies of the Hongzhou and Niutou schools. *Ibid.*, *ZZ.* vol. 14: 279a-c; Kamata 1971: 312-315.

[35] Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 261-262. See Yanagida 1985: 379-381.

contrived goodness, not true merit."[36]

Bodhidharma is shown here presenting the emperor with exactly what he has requested, giving him the teaching that he has brought to China. This is the special transmission of Chan, not dependent on words or on that treasured coinage, "merit." Bodhidharma discredits the very heart of lay Buddhist practice when he dismisses accumulation of merit.

In contrast, let us recall that Bodhidharma appeared in the *Luoyang qielan ji* with quite a different attitude:

> The monk Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 of the Western Regions (Hsi-yü 西域) was a native of Persia. He came from the desolate frontier to visit China. Having seen the golden plates making dazzling reflections of the sunlight and shining into the clouds, and having heard the ringing of bejeweled bells lofted into the sky by the wind, he sang praises of this extraordinary artistic achievement.
>
> Bodhidharma claimed at the time to be one hundred fifty years old. But during his extensive travels, which had taken him to every corner of many countries, nowhere in the sullied world had he seen a monastery as elegant and beautiful as this one. Not even in the Buddha's realm of ultimate things was there anything like this. He chanted namah -- an expression of complete submission to the Buddha -- and held his palms together for several days after having seen it.[37]

The glittering stūpa of Yongning Monastery is the protagonist of the encounter and the Western monk is far from indifferent. This Bodhidharma, if asked, would presumably have confirmed the merit that Empress Ling accrued through all those who, like himself, were moved to piety by her creation.

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[36] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 180c19-23.

[37] *Luoyang qielan ji*, Wang, trans., 1984: 20-21.

In contrast the Chan Bodhidharma's bold declaration of "no-merit" touched sensitive nerves in the body politic. Personal disinterestedness to the point of political and sometimes literal suicide was one of the most romantic of the Confucian virtues. Official histories and historical fantasies are full of stories of ministers who bravely speak an unpalatable truth to their rulers, risking their lives out of loyalty and the selfless desire to help the ruler to practice true virtue. Chinese Buddhist hagiographies drew on Indian Buddhist hagiographies extolling self-sacrifice to tap into this topos, and so monks like Fotudeng are shown fearlessly rebuking irascible emperors for the sake of all beings subject to the state.

The crucial difference is the conflict between Confucian and Buddhist notions of secular power, as discussed in Chapter Two. The efficacy of the paradigm of the true Confucian minister depended upon the ideology of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), through which the virtuous emperor was empowered to rule as the highest earthly representative of Heaven. The Han concern with clarifying roles in service of "rectification of names" (*zhengming* 正名) obliged the minister's subordination even as it enjoined him to offer his advice regardless of personal risk.

As we have seen, Chinese Buddhists quite early began to defend the notion that although the emperor could ideally be the leading lay disciple, the members of the Saṅgha were the highest earthly representatives of the "mandate" of the Buddha-Dharma. The proper attitude of reverence of the ruler towards the Saṅgha was portrayed in the popular *Aśokāvadāna*, and was claimed to be the very foundation of Buddhism in China through the legend of Emperor Ming of the Han.

The roots of this inversion of ruler and subject go back to the founding hagiography of the Buddha's choice to fulfill his fate as a renunciant rather than as a world-ruler. Siddhārtha renounced life at the apex of this-worldly power, gave up his princely robes and ornaments and donned instead the *saṃghāṭi* robe. This becomes a paradigm for the

early Saṅgha, and the aspiring renunciant was supposed to gather rags that had been discarded as too filthy to be re-used, which he then bleached and sewed together. The monk's robe thus represents not mere renunciation but also subordination of the worldly order, expressed in the power of the Dharma to turn the deepest pollution into the highest purity.

The motif of worldly pollution turned to purity is also the basis of the economy of merit, for "filthy lucre" given to the Saṅgha is returned as the all-purpose stain-remover, merit. The connection between wealth and filth, specie and feces, was a familiar rhetorical move in many cultures long before the revelations of Freud's infantile consciousness. According to this association rulers, amidst the highest concentration of worldly wealth, are therefore also the most polluted. Such is the conviction expressed in the *Maitreyāvadāna*: "O Śakra, kings are those who do filthy things."[38]

The *Aśokāvadāna* is the *locus classicus* for the theme that even the greedy and violent acts of a king are redeemed by turning to the Buddha-Dharma, and it is also seminal for the theme of the transformative purifying power of offering. Aśoka's status as Cakravartin, or universal monarch, is attributed to the fact that in a former life he had as a little boy put dirt into the Buddha's begging bowl as an offering:

> And young Jaya, thinking to himself, "I will give some ground meal," threw a handful of dirt into the Buddha's begging bowl. . . . After presenting his offering to the Blessed One, Jaya then proceeded to make the following resolute wish (*praṇidhāna*): "By this root of good merit, I would become king and, after placing the earth under a single umbrella of sovereignty, I would pay homage to the Blessed Buddha. The compassionate Sage immediately perceived the boy's character, and recognizing the sincerity of his resolve, he saw that the desired fruit would be attained because of his field of merit. He therefore accepted the proferred dirt, and the seed of

[38] *Maitreyāvadāna*, Nattier, trans., 1988: 34.

merit that was to ripen into Aśoka's kingship was planted.[39]

John Strong, drawing upon a range of scholarship concerning early Buddhism and kingship in South and Southeast Asia, discusses the implications of this offering. He points out that the premise of the popular *avadāna* genre was that any offer to the Triple Jewel will make merit that will benefit the giver in the future: "the Buddha in particular is seen as a vast and fertile field of merit (*puṇyakṣetra*) where devotees can 'plant' their meritorious deeds."[40] The *praṇidhāna*, the resolute wish or vow made by the gift-giver, is an important fertilizer: "In the *Avadānaśataka*, for example, we find the story of a gardener who offers a lotus to the Buddha and then simply states his resolve to become a Buddha himself."[41]

The fulfillment of the *praṇidhāna* of the boy Jaya is acknowledged by the Buddha's smile and his prediction. The prediction is verbal confirmation of what the smile has already indicated, for the Buddha's smile emits rays of light that illuminate the entire cosmos and then are reabsorbed back into his body, and the place at which they reenter his body indicate the future state of the one upon whom he has smiled. The connection between offering and smile is reversed in the famous Chan story of the original mind-to-mind transmission, in which the Buddha holds up a flower and Mahākāśyapa smiles. The vow from the past and the prediction for the future disappear into the Chan lotus-chain of presented presence.

In *avadāna* time, however, when the light of the Buddha's smile reenters at his left palm, Jaya's future as a *balacakravartin* or iron-wheel monarch is assured. Strong points out that it is usual in this literature for people to make vows to attain various types of

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[39] Strong 1983: 200-201.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

enlightenment, but not kingship. He says: "We should not take this as somehow belittling Aśoka's vow. Rather, it suggests that, in our text, Aśoka's kingship is treated as though it were a form of enlightenment."[42]

That this would result from a gift of dirt is also unusual and even Aśoka himself is astounded when he learns of his former "causes" from Upagupta. Strong points out the symbolic link between the gift of dirt and sovereignty over the earth, but also draws attention to the link between the superiority of Aśoka's guide Upagupta and the superior purity of his offerings in former lives. Upagupta's condition as an arhat, one who even earned the epithet of "a Buddha without the characteristics," is borne out by his physical beauty and smooth skin, in contrast to Aśoka's rough skin and displeasing appearance.[43]

In the *Aśokāvadāna*, the Buddha has Ānanda mix Jaya's dirt with cowdung, thus purifying it before spreading it in the Buddha's path. The Buddha "consumes" the offering by walking upon it and avoids disobeying his own injunction that the monks should accept what is given to them. Strong takes up the theme of dirt-consumption with reference to a passage in Paul Mus' *Barabudur*, in which Mus links the Vedic ritual offering of soma, a Buddhist story of an offering of honey overflowing onto the ground, and Jaya's gift of dirt. Strong says:

> It is curious that no one seems to have connected the gift of dirt with the myth of the *Mahāsammata*, 'the Great Elect'. . . . In that text, the primordial paradisal time -- a time without kings -- is portrayed as one when the earth itself was edible. Dirt was then not simply "dirt," but a delightful soft substance that looked like butter . . . and was as sweet as honey. It was only later, with the loss of the Golden Age, that the earth hardened, that plants grew, and that "dirt" became dirty. . . . It is appropriate therefore that the gift of dirt should be made by Jaya, a little boy. As a

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 63-65.

king, as Aśoka, he can no longer offer dirt to the Buddha, not simply because he knows better, nor just because he has more to give, but also because, in the mythic dimension, the time when dirt can be eaten is a time when there are no kings.[44]

Appropriately, what King Aśoka ultimately offers the Saṅgha is -- the earth. Aśoka vows to make an offering of one hundred *koṭis* of gold pieces to the Buddha-Dharma. He makes a number of lavish offerings, culminating with the following: "Also, he had offered to the *ārya Saṅgha* the whole earth (except for the state treasury), as well as his harem, his state officials, his self, and his son Kunāla, and had redeemed them all with four hundred thousand pieces of gold."[45]

After this, Aśoka is still four *koṭis* short of the goal. He becomes ill and is despondent that he will be unable to fulfill his vow. His grandson and heir-apparent takes control of the treasury and prevents him from sending more to the Saṅgha, at which point Aśoka sends the gold plates upon which he is served until this too is prevented, and so on until he sends the very last gift he can command, half a myrobalan fruit. This gift greatly moves the elder of the Saṅgha and it is reverently shared as soup among all the monks. Then Aśoka, dying, makes his last decree and gives the whole earth (once again excepting the state treasury) to the Saṅgha. What he could not complete in his life is carried out through his death, because the new king could not be consecrated until the earth was redeemed from the Saṅgha once more for the price of the remaining four *koṭis* of gold.[46]

The *Aśokāvadāna* extols giving to one's utmost, but the implicit counterpart to Aśoka's beggaring himself for the sake of the Saṅgha is the central motif of the early

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[44] *Ibid.*, p. 68-69.

[45] *Aśokāvadāna*, Strong, trans., 1983: 287.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 287-292

*Jātaka* tales, in which the Buddha as a bodhisattva in previous lives sacrifices even his (or its) own body for the sake of other living beings. Yet at the same time the Buddha's teaching of the Middle Way enjoined that the extremes of ascetic self-mortification and self-immolation were to be avoided. The theme of physical self-sacrifice was a recurrent one in Buddhist texts, yet it was fraught with a certain tension. Fuller exploration of this ambivalence is beyond the scope of the present study, but in the legend of Bodhidharma and other episodes in the *Lidai fabao ji* we see the gift of wealth to the Saṅgha explicitly devalued while in contrast physical austerities (*dhūta*) are sanctified.[47] In an example evoking the motif of honeyed earth as well as Daoist alchemical practices, Wuxiang claims that rather than partake in the scheduled security of communal monastic life he "sat alone in vacuity" and ate smelted earth (*liantu* 練土) as food when no donations were given to him.[48]

Emperor Wu of the Liang, to whom Bodhidharma replied "no merit," is notable in China for having tried to emulate Aśoka's example. He repeatedly "gave" himself, his family, and his royal robes to the Saṅgha to be ransomed back by his ministers. In pageants of self-abnegation he donned simple white robes to offer himself up as a servant at the Tongtai 同泰 monastery which he had constructed and endowed with an "Inexhaustible Treasury" (*wujin zang* 無盡藏). The difference between drama and *dhūta* was not lost on later Confucian critics, one of whom comments acerbically, "Had he truly given himself, then the Buddha should have taken him, of which there is no indication."[49]

The depth of Emperor Wu's piety led him to attempt to assume benevolent control

[47] For a discussion of the ambivalence towards self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism, see Jan Yün-hua 1965: 243-268.

[48] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 187a16-19. 練 here is a cognate of *lian* 鍊, to smelt or refine, used in descriptions of Daoist immortality practices.

[49] Quoted in Gernet [1956] 1995: 243.

over the Saṅgha as a lay bodhisattva-ruler. In the Wei rulers we saw antecedents for this blurring of boundaries between secular and spiritual leadership, and later Empress Wu Zetian would take the experiment much farther. Emperor Wu's attempt was however rebuffed by one of his favorites, the monk Zhizang 智藏 (458-522), who made the familiar argument that the Saṅgha was not to be subjected to any form of secular authority whatsoever. Zhizang even on one occasion occupied the seat reserved for the emperor, claiming descent from Dīpaṅkara Buddha as justification.[50]

Bodhidharma's flat denial to the emperor-who-would-be-bodhisattva is perhaps an echo of Zhizang, but there are also circumstances of the early eighth century to be taken into account. When Shenhui was formulating his notions of the Chan patriarchy and either appropriating or creating this scene between Bodhidharma and the emperor, there was widespread ambivalence towards the merit-gaining activities of emperors. As will be discussed later in this chapter, during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian in the late seventh century the economy was overburdened by the huge scale of her pious projects, and in Shenhui's time historians were still assessing the damage. Although merit-gaining was deeply enmeshed in the fabric of Chinese society and extravagant expenditure on Buddhist projects continued to be a recurring feature in Chinese history, at the time of the rise of Chan there was particularly acute need for a cheaper or perhaps even remunerative form of Buddhism. So Bodhidharma's comment can also be read as something of a relief.

While keeping in mind these several facets of Bodhidharma's radical image -- his overturning of traditional Buddhist teachings, of Confucian notions of respect due to emperors, and of the burden of merit -- let us turn now to the story of his transmission to Huike and his final teaching.

In the *Lidai fabao ji* section on the second patriarch Huike, it is related that Huike came to Bodhidharma hoping to be his disciple, but Bodhidharma initially ignored him:

[50] Chen 1964: 126.

> When [Huike] first came [with the intention] to serve the Great Master, he placed himself before him. That night there was a heavy snowfall, and the snow rose up to [Huike's] waist, but he did not stir. The Great Master said, "He who would seek the Dharma must spare neither life nor limb." Huike then chopped off one of his arms, whereupon the blood flowed out as white milk. The Great Master then wordlessly transmitted the mind-pledge, and gave him a *kāṣāya* (monk's) robe.[51]

This is on the one hand the classic Chan transmission -- in Bodhidharma's recognition of Huike as his disciple, no mastery of scripture is mentioned and the teaching is transmitted directly from the mind of the master to the mind of the disciple, who then receives a robe as a verification of the transmission. However, this is also another example of the characteristic *Lidai fabao ji* blend of the germinal motifs of the sudden teaching such as unmediated mind-to-mind transmission, and the perennial motifs of mediation, such as uncanny signs and self-immolation.

This *kāṣāya*[52] is not *the* robe, Bodhidharma's own robe of Chan legend, but the initial gift prefigures the chain of conferral that will ensue. A monk's robe is a non-belonging that stands for renunciation of belongings, belonging to the body of the Saṅgha as a whole and at the same time the most personal of the objects that the monk is sanctioned to use by his vows. Robes or cloth for robes were among the canonically-backed currencies in the economy of merit, instituted as a traditional gift to the Saṅgha in the early Buddhist *kaṭhina* rite. In the passage above, the giving and receiving of a robe serves as confirmation that an ordination within ordination has taken place -- in the terms

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[51] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 181a19-23.

[52] Lore about the Buddha's robe transmission usually involves either the *kāṣāya* or the *saṃghāṭī*. *Kāṣāya* was originally a generic term for monk's robes, designating their reddish-brown color. The prescribed monk's robes are the inner (*antarvāsa*) and outer (*uttarāsaṅga*) everyday robes, and the "great" (*saṃghāṭī*) robe used only for formal occasions and teaching. For a fascinating discussion of the complex symbolism of the *kāṣāya* in China and Japan, see Faure 1995.

of the bodhisattva precepts texts discussed in the previous chapter, the robe becomes a "good sign." The good sign of the earlier precepts texts constituted acknowledgment of the petitioner's confession and repentance, and signified his or her successful reception of the precepts. Here the good sign of the robe is given in confirmation of Huike's sacrificed arm and a wordless mind-pledge, thus ritual confession and reception are translated into the complementary opposition between body-offering and formless Dharma.

In the eleventh century *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Record of the Transmission of the Lamp Compiled in the Jingde Era), the famous passage in which Bodhidharma and Huike have a dialogue about pacification of the mind has an exact parallel in a subsequent dialogue between Huike and the third patriarch Sengcan, and the key term is no longer mind but transgression. In this dialogue Huike's enactment of Chan formless repentance severs the link between transgression and physical affliction, a link that was as deeply embedded as that between merit and health in the Chinese Buddhist worldview. Note that this conceptual fetter appears as an attribute of lay faith and its severance admits the layman to the Saṅgha and thence to the patriarchy.

> There was a layman of over forty years of age who did not give his name. He came to pay obeisance [to Huike] and asked him, "My body is afflicted with palsy. I beg the Venerable to [effect my] repentance and relieve me of transgression. The master replied, "Bring me your transgression and I will relieve you." After a while the layman said, "I have searched for my transgression, and I can't do it." The master said, "I have relieved you of transgression altogether. You should take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha." [The layman] said, "Looking at you, Venerable, I know this is 'Saṅgha.' But I haven't yet figured out how to identify 'Buddha' and 'Dharma.'" The master said, "This mind is Buddha. This mind is Dharma. Dharma and Buddha are non-dual. The jewel of the Saṅgha is also thus." [The layman] said, "Today for the first time I

know that the transgression-nature is neither inside nor outside nor in between. If one's mind is thus, Buddha and Dharma are non-dual!" The Great Master deeply appreciated his capacity, and had him tonsured. He said, "This is our jewel! He should be called Sengcan (Saṅgha-gem)."[53]

In the *Lidai fabao ji* the parallelism and theme of affliction remains, but the passage becomes a foreshadowing rather than an echo, replicating Huineng's first encounter with Hongren but pivoting on the supplicant's physical rather than ethnic disqualifications.[54]

When he first encountered Master Ke, Can appeared to have palsy, and they met in the midst of a crowd. Master Ke asked, "Where are you from? What business brings you here?" Sengcan replied, 'I came to offer myself to the Venerable." Master Ke said, "For you, a person afflicted with palsy, what good is it to meet with me?" Can replied, "Although my body is afflicted, between the mind of the afflicted and the Venerable's mind, what difference is there?" Master Ke realized that Can was no ordinary man and subsequently entrusted him with the Dharma and the *kāṣāya* robe of verification.[55]

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[53] *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *T.* 51 (2076) 220c14-23. Faure gives an interesting account of Chan formless confession in light of theories of formulation of the self, see Faure 1993: 258-259. See also Wu Peiyi 1978.

[54] The issue of Huineng's identity as a "southern barbarian" or ethnic minority is a fascinating topic beyond the scope of the present study. There is an aspect of it that sheds some light on the issues involved in the dispute over the patriarchy, however. Gernet mentions a pivotal historical incident in which the protagonists epitomize the eighth century conflict between the great clans of northwestern China who were restored to power after Empress Wu's reign, and the civil servants recruited through the exam system, of whom an increasing number came from the south. The civil servant Zhang Jiuling (673-740), whom Gernet characterizes as a "creole born in the tropics," was opposed in 736 by the northern aristocrat Li Linfu (patron of An Lushan), who gained the post of prime minister and virtually ruled the empire from that time until his death in 752. See Gernet [1972] 1982: 259. The opposition between Huineng and Shenxiu bears some resemblance to this political and ethnic struggle, but there are important differences. Huineng was also a "creole from the south" and a self-made or self-realized man, albeit an illiterate. Shenxiu's milieu and source of support was among the northern aristocracy, although he was also favored by the empress. The most telling difference is of course that in the Chan version, the southern barbarian won.

[55] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 181b19-24.

Here is another twist in the theme of offering and the patriarchy. Huike, himself disabled by his own offering to Bodhidharma, at first rejects the imperfect body that is offered to him. As in the parallel encounter between Huineng and Hongren, this performance has two victors and none: the patriarch's apparent lack of insight validates his interlocutor and can at the same time be read as a testing device similar to Bodhidharma's ignoring of Huike.

In each successive biography, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s continue to embroider the themes of persecution and the self-sacrifice/self-mastery of the patriarchs. Like Huike, Sengcan pretends to be mad in order to foil his persecutors, and as mentioned in the previous chapter his final masterpiece is his death in a standing posture grasping the branch of a tree. In the case of his successor Daoxin these themes take a grimly humorous turn. The following incident arises due to Daoxin's refusal to comply with an invitation to court:

> The messenger was again sent to repeat the invitation. He went to Chan Master Xin's place and said, "The Emperor sends me to invite the Chan Master." The Chan Master earnestly pleaded old age and would not go, telling the messenger, "If you want my head you are welcome to behead me and take it, but I absolutely will not go." The messenger returned to the Emperor and delivered the message, "If need be, he would allow his head to be cut off and taken, but his mind absolutely will not go."
>
> The Emperor again sent off the messenger, [this time] wearing a sword with which to get the Chan Master's head. He ordered him, "Do not harm the Venerable." The messenger arrived at the Venerable's place and said, "The Emperor orders me to get the Venerable's head. Will the Chan Master go or not?" The Venerable replied, "I absolutely will not go." The messenger said, "The Emperor orders that if the Chan Master will not come, I am to cut off his head and bring it." Great Master Xin extended

> his head and said, "Chop away." The messenger turned his blade within an instant [of striking.] Great Master Xin shouted, "Why don't you chop, how much longer must I wait?" The messenger replied, "The Emperor ordered that I was not to harm the Venerable." Chan Master Xin gave a great laugh and said, "I've taught you to recognize someone who stays put."[56]

This play upon the motifs of threatened persecution and willing self-sacrifice endures through several successive patriarchal biographies in the *Lidai fabao ji*, although Hongren's patriarchy is uneventful in this regard and Zhishen, as we will see, employs a different kind of passive resistance. If we consider this motif of self-sacrifice inter- rather than intra-textually, we find subtle variations throughout the stratigraphy of the Chan legend of the transmission between Bodhidharma and Huike. In the *Chuan fabao ji*, Huike instantly cuts off his arm when Bodhidharma asks him if he could give up his life for the sake of the Dharma. In the *Lengqie shizi ji*, Huike's self-mutilation and subsequent lack of pain during his vigil in the snow becomes an illustration of the power of true awareness.[57] In Shenhui's version Bodhidharma has already approved of Huike's dedication and so the arm becomes an offering rather than a proof or bid for recognition. Shenhui compares Huike's story to a *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* tale of a bodhisattva selflessly throwing himself off a cliff, a topos that harks back to the *Jātaka* tales.[58] Only in the *Lidai fabao ji* does Huike bleed white milk like the Indian patriarch Siṁha, and he does so again when he is executed in circumstances also recalling Siṁha's martyrdom. Bracketing the *Lidai fabao ji* at the other end of an ideological and historical continuum,

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[56] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 181c19-29.

[57] The *Chuan Fabao ji* passage is in Yanagida 1971: 365, French trans., Faure 1989: 123; the *Lengqie shizi ji* passage is in Yanagida 1971: 365, French trans., Faure 1989: 129.

[58] *Putidamo nanzong ding shifei lun* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論 (Treatise Determining the True and False about the Southern School of Bodhidharma), Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 263.

the *Jingde chuandeng lu* biography of Huike incorporates the challenging nature of Bodhidharma's exchange with Huike, the snow, the severed arm, and the reference to a tradition of self-sacrifice, but not the mysterious milk-blood.[59]

In these versions of the Chan legend we can also see the scale of merit repeatedly tipping towards physical suffering-as-offering, *dhūta*, and away from the offering of material goods, *dāna*. These offerings appropriate to the spheres of ordained and lay devotees, respectively, tended to strike a certain balance within the larger Buddhist context. On the one hand, extremes of *dhūta* were beloved of hagiographers yet heterodox according to the doctrine of the Middle Way, and on the other hand the treasury of scriptural praise for the *pāramitā* of lay generosity was virtually inexhaustible. As we shall see in the stories of Wuxiang and Wuzhu, some of the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s key claims hinged upon their advocacy of *dhūta* over *dāna*, and in this they represent yet again an extreme even within the Chan spectrum of values.

Let us, however, return to the story of Bodhidharma's robe. In the *Lidai fabao ji*, Huike serves Bodhidharma for six years after the initial transmission, during which time monks from the Northern Wei court repeatedly tried to poison Bodhidharma, jealous of the number of students he attracted. Among his antagonists, the translator and exegete Bodhiruci is named.

> Now, it happened that in Wei the Trepiṭaka[60] Bodhiruci and the Vinaya Master Guangtong 光統 put poison in some food which they gave to the Master [Bodhidharma]. When the Great Master had finished eating he asked for a dish and vomited up a pint of snakes. Once again they fed him poisoned food. When he had taken the food and eaten it, he sat atop a massive boulder, and when the poison came out the boulder cracked.

[59] *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *T.* 51 (2076) 219b7-20.

[60] Trepiṭaka is the title of a Tripiṭaka Master.

Altogether they tried to poison him six times. The Great Master informed his disciples, "I originally came in order to pass on the Dharma. Now that I've gotten someone, what's the good of lingering on? Then he gave [Huike] his *kāṣāya* as a token of the Dharma transmission. He said to Huike, "My destiny is this poison. You also will not escape these tribulations. In the sixth generation, the life of the Dharma heir will be as a dangling thread." He finished speaking and immediately died of the poison.[61]

Here the *kāṣāya* is clearly *the* robe that Shenhui claimed was passed through four subsequent generations of patriarchs and came to rest with Huineng. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s, however, added three more patriarchs in order to get the robe to Wuzhu. Following the transmission to Huike there are some portentous and cryptic episodes, including Bodhidharma's notorious characterization of his disciples: "The one who has got my marrow is Huike, the one who has got my bones is Daoyu 道育, and the one who has got my flesh is the nun Zongchi 總持."[62] The *Lidai fabao ji* also includes the well-known passage in which the Northern Wei emissary Song Yun meets Bodhidharma in the Pamirs, carrying one shoe. Asked where he is going, the master replies that he is returning home, and says that Song Yun's ruler has died. Song Yun returns to find this true, but no one believes that he has seen Bodhidharma until they open his tomb and find only a single shoe.[63]

In the *Lidai fabao ji* section focussing on Huike, the scene of Bodhidharma's death is

[61] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 180c26-181a4. This is more elaborate than the version in the *Chuan fabao ji* and included in Shenhui's biographies of the patriarchs. For the *Chuan fabao ji* version see Yanagida 1971: 360. For Shenhui's version see *Heze heshang wenda za zhengyi* 荷澤和上問答雜徵義 (Miscellaneous Dialogues of the Venerable of Heze), Suzuki and Kōda, eds., 1934: 54.

[62] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 181a7-8.

[63] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 181a9-17. Leaving a tomb empty save for some personal effect is a trope associated with Daoist masters, borrowed much earlier for Fotudeng's hagiography, in which only his staff and bowl remain in his tomb and he is sighted in the desert. *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2059) 387a14-17. There is no meeting with Bodhidharma in the account of Song Yun's mission in the *Luoyang qielan ji*, but the emissaries do encounter a pratyekabuddha's shoe enshrined in a stūpa. *Luoyang qielan ji*, Wang, trans., 1984: 222.

repeated, but this time Huike questions him about the transmission:

> [Huike] further questioned the Great Master [Bodhidharma]: "In the Western Kingdom, to whom did you pass the succession, and did you also transmit the *kāṣāya* robe of verification to him or not?"
>
> The Great Master replied, "The people of the Western Kingdom are devout, they are not devious. My successor there is Prajñāpāramitā. To him I have passed the succession without transmitting the robe. In the Kingdom of China, although the many beings have the Great Vehicle nature, yet there are some who falsely claim to have obtained the Way and the fruit [of enlightenment]. I have transmitted the robe for the sake of verification of the teachings. It is like the consecration of a Cakravartin King who obtains the seven true jewels and inherits the eminent kingly throne. Possession of the robe is the outward expression of the true inheritance of the Dharma."[64]

Bodhidharma here compares the robe to the regalia of an universal monarch. There is a long-standing scriptural association between consecration of a king and Buddhist ordination. The Buddhist rite borrows features from Indian royal consecration rites, and abhiṣeka or princely consecration is the final stage in many texts, such as the *Mahāvastu*, that describe the bodhisattva path.[65] The late sinologist Anna Seidel pointed out that Bodhidharma's analogy would have resonated with Chinese regard for the sacred talismans that validated the reigning dynasty's mandate to rule. These sacred heirlooms were supposed to protect the dynasty until the time had come for a new cycle and a new dynastic succession. In the same manner, one of the underlying implications of the story of Bodhidharma's death is that by finally consecrating Huike as his heir, Bodhidharma has passed on the patriarchy along with the robe and is no longer able to pass the poison.

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[64] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 181a26-b2.

[65] See Lamotte [1958] 1988: 625-629.

Seidel notes the paradox between Bodhidharma's claim that in India the robe was not necessary as a token of Dharma inheritance, and his comparison of the robe to the regalia consecrating an Indian king.[66] The claim that there was no transmission of the patriarchal robe in India originates with Shenhui, and Shenhui is likewise the source for the paradox raised at the beginning of this section, the apparent paradox between de-signification of the monastic robe in general and enchantment of one robe in particular.[67]

Shenhui's views on transmission were articulated in terms at once absolute and absolutely particular: the "truth" was the one true transmission of the Dharma vested in one patriarch for each generation and the "false" was Shenxiu's heirs' assumption of this lineage. His agenda can easily be linked to personal rivalries and ambitions, but it should also be viewed within the larger context of the Chinese Saṅgha's attempts to establish a clear source of Buddhist authority independent of the uncertainties and corrupting effects of patronage. Bodhidharma's robe can be seen as the consecrating regalia for a transmission intended to establish a Saṅgha within the Saṅgha, to interrupt the ongoing pageant of investiture of select Buddhists at the imperial court.

Shenhui's ideology of the robe will be discussed at greater length, but here let me highlight some ways in which the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s translated Shenhui's sudden extremes back into somewhat more conventional "two-tiered" hagiographic terms. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s follow Shenhui in stressing that Bodhidharma's robe designates an elect who protect the transmission threatened by Chinese clergy without true vocation, those who "falsely claim to have obtained the Way." However, they seem more taken with the drama than the Dharma in Shenhui's account -- they embroider upon the stories of persecution of the patriarchs and edit out a good deal of Shenhui's abstract ideological

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[66] From an invaluable article by the late Anna Seidel, entitled "Den'e" (*Chuanyi* 傳衣, Transmission of the Robe), to be included in *Hōbōgirin* VIII; English translation to appear in a forthcoming selection of Dr. Seidel's works. (Draft pp. 10-15.)

[67] For Shenhui's claim that the robe was not transmitted in India, see Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 296.

justification.

As we have seen, the degeneracy of the Saṅgha was a simple motif with a complex history, and in the next section I will discuss some links between this motif and the doctrines of the final age of the Dharma. Seen in the light of *mofa* eschatology, the transmission of Bodhidharma's robe becomes akin to the transmission of scriptures which claim to protect the hearer/wearer in the age of corruption of the Dharma. At the same time, in the *Lidai fabao ji* distinction between China and the "Western Kingdom" one might read the privileging of the latter as repository of absolute transmission, unaffected by decline or the need for protection. Transmission of the Dharma is the self-defining function of the Dharma -- the teachings of the *Prajñāpāramitā* are left to Prajñāpāramitā.

## A Crisis of Signs

On one level, the challenge that the "Southern School" presented to the Buddhist establishment was a reprise of an ongoing struggle to define and uphold uncorrupted transmission of the Dharma. In previous chapters I have tried to show relations between the Buddhist clergy and their respective Chinese polities in such a light as to elucidate the uniqueness of each manifestation of this struggle as well as commonalities. Continuing to trace the turbulent confluence between Saṅgha and state, in this section I will take up issues important in the Sui 隋 dynasty (589-618) and discuss their impact on the early Tang. I will also suggest connections between these issues and the emergence of Chan as a distinct affiliation.

The Sui dynasty, though brief, consolidated the empire for the first time since the end of the Han in the third century, and laid the foundations for the administrative style of the Tang. The Sui aristocracy were largely descended from the Northern Wei, via the equally short-lived Western Wei (535-557) and Northern Zhou (556-581) dynasties. The

Sui inherited both the northern-style government of hereditary military elites controlling a centrally-administered polity, and the southern-style multiple political units comprised of landed literati clans and their clients. Amalgamating these styles, Sui administration combined a hierarchical military organization and a civil-service bureaucracy, and it bequeathed this structure and the resulting tension to the Tang, which was also established by a clan of northern origins.

In order to imagine what this would mean for the Saṅgha, one could contrast the intense concentration of temples in the northern imperial capitals and the dispersed monastic estates of the south, which like Huiyuan's Mt. Lu managed to maintain relative autonomy. The two Sui emperors lavishly supported Buddhism and tried to manage the Saṅgha by keeping it dependent on the court. The Tang rulers tended to vacillate. They officially supported Daoism and repeatedly tried to impose institutional and legal containment of the Buddhist clergy, and to control its non-governmental sources of revenue. On the other hand, widespread support for Buddhism made the Saṅgha powerful enough to continue to win concessions from successive emperors.[68]

A singular dynamic emerges in many histories of relations between religious and secular spheres of authority -- it often appears that the benefit that each gains from the other depends upon keeping an agonistic edge to their relationship. This dynamic is not confined to the world of medieval Chinese religious politics. Variations can be seen in other contexts, as for example the struggles between Renaissance popes and their anointed Holy Roman emperors. In these instances, the value of the ideological currency that religious and lay elites derive from each other depends on avoiding hierarchical stasis where one side entirely dominates the other.

In the case of medieval Chinese politics, much of the debate that we have reviewed so far has revolved around the clergy's autonomy. In the fourth and early fifth centuries

[68] See Weinstein 1987; Gernet [1972] 1982: 190-195, 220-222.

Buddhist and lay elites articulated separate spheres of ritual responsibility and practice, distinct prerogatives and differing versions of history, and at the same time indulged in much mutual borrowing of terms and mirroring of symbolism. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the overtly Buddhist Northern Wei imperium and its fragments strove to avoid being overshadowed by the Buddhist counterparts they courted.

The opposition between religious and secular is however an heuristic construct that I must qualify. The creed by which most administrative affairs in China were regulated could be termed secular insofar as its normative source, Confucius, was said to have stated that the otherworldly was not his primary concern. The practical business of government was nevertheless a highly ritualized affair, and for the Confucian paragon careful attention to temporal administration and the welfare of the family and state was in effect a religious vocation.

At the very heart of the Chinese polity was the imperial cult with its calendar of sacrifices honoring ancestors and patron deities. The imperial cult was a foundation shared by Confucian officials and their indigenous Daoist counterparts and rivals, and although it came to include Buddhist deities in its pantheon it was not Buddhist-centered except under non-sinicized dynasties such as the early Northern Wei. On the other hand, Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei also instituted the first official Confucian temple. The continual interchange between Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist elements in the ongoing construction of the Chinese imperial state is a complex and rich subject, unfortunately beyond the scope of the present study.

As we have seen, however, beginning with fourth century Buddhist involvement in Chinese philosophical and metaphysical speculation, Confucians increasingly claimed territory that both Buddhist clergy and Confucian administrators were willing to define as this-worldly, in opposition to Buddhist appropriation of the a-temporal and otherworldly. And the tides were to reverse their flow in the ninth century, when the this-worldly

orientation of Chan Buddhism redefined the terms of the religious yet again.

Nonetheless, Buddhist-secular relations from the fifth through the eighth centuries were predicated, in spite of steadily increasing official strictures, on the assumption that the clergy could serve as mediators between the this-worldly and the other- or non-worldly. The rubric of the three bodies of the Buddha, while not always explicitly employed in the different Chinese Buddhist schools, was an expression of the mutually inclusive hierarchy between the levels of 1) this-worldly teaching and practice, 2) marvelous otherwordly manifestations, and 3) non-dual absolute reality/understanding. Religious professionals could to a certain extent specialize, and relate to the lay community as teachers and exegetes (corresponding to the first level), as miracle-workers and prognosticators (corresponding to the second level), and as persons transcending and reconciling all categories.[69]

Thus there was more room at the top, both doctrinally and institutionally. The Sui and Tang systems of classification of the teachings shaped the Dharma into the hierarchical steps of a stairway to the non-dual absolute. Within this sort of structure, interaction between the Buddhist clergy and their lay supporters could be maintained with relative mutual flexibility. The age-old Buddhist emphasis on *upāya*, or skill-in-means, the desirable ability to adapt the teachings to the capacities of the listeners, mitigated for a multi-tiered and multi-faceted presentation of the teachings. Within this scaffolding there were many levels upon which the Buddhist clergy could both relate to and compete with homologous aspects of secular society.

As I have suggested, however, this flexible and mutually beneficial relationship was not necessarily smooth. There is much to be said for the value of a worthy adversary. Without a strong secular power maintaining order and borders and the kind of economy

[69] See Faure 1991: 53-78 for an insightful discussion of the mutual dependence and dissonance between the ultimate and conventional (mediated) levels of truth in Buddhist discourse and praxis.

that could create surpluses (and surplices), the Buddhist church could not thrive so well. Buddhist stories of monks and rulers routinely inverted the Saṅgha's mundane dependency, demonstrating that the outer limit of secular power was the threshold of the all-encompassing realm of the Dharma. On the other hand, for rulers the Triple Jewel served as an alluring mirror, a mysterious and potentially dangerous "other," and a reservoir of spiritual wealth. It was a reservoir, one might say, that needed to be periodically drained and whose dams needed constant repair in order to preserve its clear and bright original nature.

One of the most important mediating roles for the clergy was of course in the arena of ritual, a vast topic that I can only touch upon briefly. In order to trace connections between ordination rites discussed previously and further developments in the Tang, we will turn to Sui dynasty texts on administration of bodhisattva precepts to elites and Buddhist state protection ceremonies. Examining the contexts of these works one immediately notes associations with the Tiantai school, and so we will also consider the mediations of the Tiantai master Zhiyi and his impact on Chan.

In his article "The Ordination Ritual in the *Platform Sūtra* within the Context of the East Asian Buddhist Vinaya Tradition," Paul Groner has traced the evolution of sixth to eighth century bodhisattva precepts manuals that were based on the bodhisattva precepts texts discussed in the previous chapter, an evolution in which the Tiantai school played a key role. Groner speculates about a trend that one might characterize as "professionalization" of bodhisattva ordination rituals:

> Shortly after Chinese monks began performing bodhisattva ordination ceremonies, they also began composing ordination manuals which were tailored to meet the needs of particular constituencies. During the Six Dynasties period, manuals were written describing ordination for kings and nobles. Although some of these were designed to intensify the

candidate's faith, others were probably written in response to more mundane desires. Ceremonies based on the *Mo-ho-seng-ch'i lü* (*T.* 1425 *Mahāsaṅghikavinaya*) were designed to obtain good luck in marriage, birth, on long journeys and for use in funeral ceremonies and at dedications of new buildings. The bodhisattva precepts were probably used in a similar fashion.[70]

Sengyou's *Chusanzang ji ji* lists a number of texts recorded on the occasion of reception of the bodhisattva precepts by imperial or aristocratic devotees during the Six Dynasties period, none of which are extant.[71] An important text of this type is included in Daoxuan's *Guang Hongming ji*, entitled *Sui Yangdi yu Tiantai shan Yi chanshi suo shou pusajie wen* 隋煬帝於天台山顗禪師所受菩薩戒文 (Text of Emperor Yang of the Sui's Reception of the Bodhisattva Precepts from Dhyāna Master Yi of Mt. Tiantai). Tiantai Zhiyi 天台智顗 (538-597) was the master of ceremonies and Śākyamuni and Mañjuśrī were evoked as preceptors. In the text, the future emperor and parricide is quoted as saying that "no matter what powers the divine masters possess, they need human masters to propagate the doctrine."[72] Although in hindsight this may appear a rather chilling recommendation of human agency, the Sui rulers' appreciation for the mediating powers of Zhiyi and his disciples was to have important consequences for the course of Buddhism in the Tang.

Tang Buddhist scholars owed much to the vista gained from the heights systematically built up in Zhiyi's *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (Great Cessation and Insight).

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[70] Groner 1990b: 235. For a discussion of sixth to seventh century bodhisattva ordination manuals as they relate to Zhanran's 湛然 (711-782) *Fanwang jing*-based ordination manual, see *ibid.*, pp. 235-245.

[71] *Chusanzang ji ji*, *T.* 55 (2145) 92c-93a. See Kuo 1994: 47.

[72] *Guang hongming ji*, *T.* 52 (2103) 305c, Kuo, trans., 1994: 48 (French), 230 (English). A commentary gives the date of the ceremony as 591, before the future Emperor Yang murdered his father Emperor Wen in 604. (*T.* 46 (1934) 803b-804b.) Emperor Yang was hardly a bodhisattva, even if one takes into account that it was the duty of dynastic historiographers to present the last emperor of the previous dynasty as a degenerate.

The work is founded upon the doctrine of the Three Truths, the truths of the Provisional (jia 假) and Empty (kong 空) (the Madhyamaka Two Truths) dialectically reconciled in the truth of the Middle (zhong 中). The "Middle," the mutual identity of the apparent opposition between absolutely empty and relatively real, is the principle or Buddha-nature inherent in all things, immanent in a single instant of thought. The reconciliation of śūnyatā and *upāya* is the structural support of Zhiyi's system, most notably the *panjiao* 判教 (classification of the teachings) in the *Mohe zhiguan*, in which the fourth and highest of the Buddha's teachings is the "sudden and perfect," identified with the Truth of the Middle and the simultaneous realization of cessation (*zhi* 止) and insight (*guan* 觀), and represented by the teaching of the One Vehicle in the *Lotus Sūtra*.[73]

A wide array of doctrines and contemplative and devotional practices are harmonized in the all-inclusive hierarchy of the *Mohe zhiguan*, yet perhaps inevitably subsequent Buddhists would struggle to claim the high middle ground either in Zhiyi's own terms or in response to them. In his article "The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Chan," Faure discusses how exclusive notions of practice in Chan and Jingtu 淨土 (Pure Land) evolved in part through rendering down the Tiantai model, and he also points out that Shenhui's sudden teaching was especially radical in leveling the edifice to its pinnacle. From a common background in the welter of doctrines and practices of the Six Dynasties and Sui, the differentiation of Chan and Pure Land trends was accentuated by doctrinal emphasis upon the all-encompassing superiority of one practice, formless meditation or no-thought (*wunian* 無念) and recitation of the Buddha's name (*nianfo* 念佛), respectively.[74] Although Chan practitioners were increasingly concerned to be

[73] Selected secondary works on Zhiyi's system include: Hurvitz [1962] 1980; Sekiguchi 1969; Chappell, ed., 1983; Stevenson 1986 & 1987; Swanson 1989; Donner and Stevenson 1983.

[74] Faure 1986. For discussion of the Tiantai influence on Chan, see Sekiguchi 1969; Yanagida 1969b; Donner 1987, McRae 1992. On the emergence of Pure Land, see Tanaka 1990 and Gomez 1996, and on Pure Land and Chan, see Shih Heng-ching 1992 and Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 2, pp. 25-32).

ideologically distinct not only from other Buddhist schools but (especially) from each other, in practice meditational and devotional aspects seem rather difficult to separate at any period of Buddhist history. The Bao Tang monastery may indeed have been a devotion-free zone for a brief period in the eighth century, but it was later assimilated into the school of Fazhao's 法照 (d. 820) five-tone *nianfo.*

Zhiyi's system influenced the emergence of a distinct Chan trend both in what it taught practitioners to value as well as what it licensed them to reject. For Zhiyi, the Truth of the Middle was an historical as well as an absolute truth. Daniel Stevenson discusses Zhiyi's excoriation of two personifications of the degradation of the Dharma, the intellectually arrogant Dharma master and the ignorant dhyāna master. Stevenson says that for Zhiyi, "both figures were endowed with a tangible historicity," and that he attributed the Northern Zhou persecution of 574-577 to their excesses. Yet Zhiyi does not identify these reprobates with specific individuals, and Stevenson shows that this allowed them to remain powerful paradigms embodying both lessons from the past and dangers in the present, citing examples of the continuing role this opposition played in shaping Tiantai orthodoxy.[75]

Characteristically, Zhiyi advocated a middle ground between these extremes, a logic that has been associated by later scholars with the reunification of north and south (or dhyāna and Dharma tendencies, respectively) brought about by the Sui in Zhiyi's lifetime. Zhiyi may have been drawing on cultural tropes but he also brought them into sharper focus, and this certainly had an impact on an emerging "Chan" consciousness. Stevenson conveys the spirit of Zhiyi's critique in the following passage:

> The pedantic dharma master is characterized by Chih-i as one whose words (*yü*) do not match his deeds (*hsing*) -- the individual who, caught up

[75] Donner and Stevenson 1993:35.

> in the exigencies of the written text, sacrifices spiritual substance for an empty intellectualism. In fact, the trope resonates closely with the image of the corpulent exegete so roundly criticized in contemporary apocryphal scriptures for his lowly addiction to the fortunes of the metropolitan monastery and aristocratic support. The benighted dhyāna practitioner is his polar opposite. Due to his indifference or even animosity toward scriptural exegesis, he promotes an ignorant asceticism and subjective intuition over deference to the wisdom of received tradition. The lot of both is spiritual stasis, if not wholesale destruction. The untutored meditator, inflating or grossly misconstruing the nature of his visions, is prone to sink into the oblivion of his own private madness. The scriptural pedant ends up dismissing religious practice altogether, either because he sees it as the domain of the spiritually obtuse or becomes so cowed by the complexities of the path that he cannot bring himself to settle on the first step. . . . Chih-i finds behind both extremes a common overbearing pride, the primary fault of which lies in its inability -- both affectively and intellectually -- to affirm the universal inclusiveness and harmony of design of the Buddha, dharma, and saṅgha.[76]

Eighth century "Southern School" Chan represents another response to these two negative poles, in which the Triple Jewel is not that of the middle, but rather the excluded middle. The Dharma was to be understood not only as non-intellectual but as transmitted in its very non-conception, from mind to mind. On the other hand, the subjective intuition of practice is excluded by the doctrine of identity of insight from master to disciple in an unbroken chain from the Buddha, which is also an identity of doctrine and practice.

If Zhiyi's dialectic of harmony between Buddha and Dharma or between dhyāna and prajñā was turned inside out in "Southern School" Chan, the same can be said of his notions of Saṅgha and *śīla*. In a work on meditation practice Zhiyi articulates three

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

mutually reinforcing and hierarchical meaning-acts in the rite of confession of sins, a rite which continued to be a fundamental Buddhist practice uniting both lay and ordained devotees. These three are 1) acknowledging one's sins according to the Vinaya, 2) seeking miraculous signs attesting to the removal of karmic burdens, as when receiving the bodhisattva precepts, and 3) meditating on the empty nature of sins.[77] The first level was the tacitly accepted "Hīnayāna" foundation of the standard bodhisattva path, as the Vinaya remained the basis of ordained status. Zhiyi's second level, the seeking of signs, was as we recall a key element in many apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts. In Chan, and particularly of course in the Bao Tang school, the meaning of the last level came to abide (or rather non-abide) in exclusion of the first two. The Bao Tang's "Southern School" antinomianism emptied the meditating sinner as well as the sin, as expressed in Wuxiang/Wuzhu's dictum that *śīla* is no-thought.

In order to further explore connections between Dharma transmission in the Sui and the conceptions of the Tiantai school, I would like to turn now to the state protection rite found in the *Renwang jing*, one of the bodhisattva precepts apocrypha discussed in Chapter Three. In 585, Zhiyi was persuaded by the Chen 陳 emperor Houzhu 後主 to come down from Mt. Tiantai to lecture on the *Renwang jing* at the southern court in Jiankang. Although the scripture recommends itself as a prophylactic against invaders, this did not prevent the Sui from overrunning the Chen four years later. Nevertheless, the scripture and the Tiantai affiliates continued to be in good odor with the Sui conquerors, and Zhiyi and his disciples produced commentaries on it for the benefit of their patrons.[78]

In the *Renwang jing*, protection of the state is predicated on protection of the Dharma

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[77] *Shi chan poluomi cidi famen* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門, *T*. 46 (1916) 485-486. See Kuo 1994: 62-64.

[78] Charles Orzech surmises that this imperial recognition is the reason that three translations of the *Renwang jing* appear in late sixth century catalogues linked to the names of three famous translators (of which only the one attributed to Kumārajīva is extant), though earlier it had been listed as an anonymous translation. Orzech 1996: 372-373. See also De Visser 1935, Vol. II: 116-189.

and Saṅgha. The premise of the text is that this state protection rite was prescribed by the Buddha to King Prasenajit and other kings to counteract calamities. The rite is described as follows:

> At that time the Buddha told the Great Kings, "All of you listen well. I will now correctly explain the method for protecting the state. You ought to receive and keep the Perfection of Wisdom [scripture]. When disorder, ruination, bandits, conflagration, and thieves come and are about to crush the state, you must invite one hundred Buddha-images, one hundred bodhisattva-images, one hundred arhat-images and an assembly of one hundred monks. The four great assemblies and the seven assemblies shall gather together to listen. Invite a hundred Dharma masters to expound the Perfection of Wisdom [scripture]. In front of one hundred lion thrones light one hundred lamps, burn one hundred blends of incense, and [scatter] one hundred kinds of colorful flowers as offerings to the Triple Jewel. Offer the three robes and various things to the Dharma masters. Eat a small meal in the middle of the day and again at another time. Great Kings, twice daily have this scripture expounded and recited."[79]

Many Mahāyāna scriptures, including this one, are prefaced with descriptions of the ranks of an assembly in which the figures on stage are both altar-images and audience. In this scripture the Buddha speaks from the most familiar of such settings, Vulture's Peak, in order to instruct the Kings in the proper replication of both stage and script. In reproducing the setting, the human audience/actors enter the gates of the scripture itself. Moreover, with the instruction about meals the rite is shown to be a purification retreat in which the laity share for a certain period of time in monastic practices. As we shall see, Chan ordination assemblies of the seventh and eight centuries were also lay purification retreats in which offerings were a key aspect of the participant's practice.

[79] *Renwang jing*, *T.* 8 (245) 829c29-830a7, attributed to Kumārajīva.

In the *Renwang jing*, the Buddha preaches that this scripture is to be disseminated in order to mitigate the evils of the final age of the Dharma, which are described at length. Charles Orzech develops the theme of the link between *mofa* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, showing that both evoke the unreliability of signs and referents. The text plays upon what Orzech terms the "crisis of referentiality" intrinsic to *mofa* sensibility, whereby outward signs of authority to transmit the Dharma, such as the monk's robe, are no longer to be trusted as evidence of worthiness.[80] In the *Renwang jing*, the advent of the age of the degenerate Dharma is signalled specifically by the usurpation of the Saṅgha by lay officials: "White-robed [lay-persons] will assume high seats [hitherto reserved for the monks], while monks will stand on the ground. . . . [You] should know that at that time the extinction of the teaching will not be long [off]."[81] In addition to inversion and usurpation, this is also a reference to *mofa* eschatology in which monastic robes themselves turn white, signalling loss of the efficacy of the Saṅgha.

The text has an apocalyptic dimension and must share some features with the many banned eschatological apocrypha of the fifth and sixth centuries that we know only from censorious reference to them in the Buddhist catalogues. Erik Zürcher has discussed the ways in which Buddhist beliefs fed into the undercurrent of utopian messianism that had repeatedly disturbed the Chinese polity since the Daoist-inspired uprisings of the Han dynasty. He points out that the non-eschatological orthodox teachings on the periodization of the Dharma or the advent of Maitreya became subversive once they were used to identify the current situation as the prelude to the apocalypse: "Any statements to the effect that the *mofa* period was at hand automatically implied a condemnation of the establishment, both ecclesiastical and political."[82] In fact, Zhiyi's teacher Huisi 慧思

[80] Orzech 1996: 376.

[81] *Renwang jing*, *T.* 8 (246) 844b14-15, attributed to Bukong; Orzech, trans., 1996: 378.

[82] Zürcher 1980: 41.

(515-577) was persecuted by fellow monks for declaring that "*mofa* is now."[83]

There is a certain contradiction inherent in the admonitions of the *Renwang jing*. The ruler is repeatedly warned against subjecting the clergy to secular authority, yet he is also held responsible for failing to counter false monks who would themselves undermine the separate status of the Saṅgha: "Nevertheless, evil monks seeking fame and profit will not rely on my teaching, and they will go before the kings of states and will themselves utter transgressions and evil, becoming the cause of the destruction of the teaching. These kings will not distinguish [between the good and evil monks], and believing and accepting these sayings will perversely establish regulation [of monastic communities] and not rely on the Buddhist prohibitions (vinaya)."[84] How is the ruler to exercise his discernment between good and evil monks and yet not subject the Saṅgha to any regulation? This tension between reverence and discernment was mediated in such pious projects as the *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄 (Catalogue of Scriptures), the Buddhist catalogue sponsored by Emperor Wen of the Sui in which many false scriptures were marked for destruction.[85] Prophetic elements were specifically tagged as indicative of spuriousness, yet in spite of the fact that the *Renwang jing* includes apocalyptic prophecy, in this same catalogue it first acquired the dignity of being labeled a translation by Kumārajīva.[86]

Undoubtedly this is because along with its theme of crisis and imminent chaos the *Renwang jing* holds out the promise that rulers are able to restore balance and prosperity

[83] Zürcher 1982: 18 n. 33.

[84] *Renwang jing*, *T.* 8 (246) 844c6-9, attributed to Bukong; Orzech, trans., 1996: 379-380.

[85] *T.* 55 (2147), completed in 594 by Fajing 法經.

[86] On prophetic elements as criteria for spuriousness, see Tokuno 1994: 21-22. There are other instances of Emperor Wen's selective tolerance of prophetic texts, as with his sanction of the prophetic passages in a translation by Naredrayaśas that were clearly meant to reveal the Sui emperor as an avatar of the popular messiah-bodhisattva Candraprabha (Yueguang tongzi 月光童子), *Dehu zhangzhe jing* 德護長者經, *T.* 14 (545) 849b. See Zürcher 1982: 25-26.

by actualizing their proper role vis à vis the Saṅgha. Orzech draws attention to the pun involved in naming the secular rulers "humane kings" (*renwang* 仁王) and the monks "kings of forbearance" (*renwang* 忍王). This pun is not a mere play on words, but involves complex analogies. *Ren* 仁 is one of the primary Confucian virtues just as *ren* 忍 (*kṣānti*) is one of the primary pāramitās. True kings are the saviors of worldly realms just as bodhisattvas are the kings of salvific realms. The two are woven together in the same continuum, the same mārga, and are interdependent in the same manner as conventional and absolute truth.[87]

In the *Mohe zhiguan* Zhiyi quotes the *Renwang jing* as support for the doctrine of the Three Truths, which he finds in the *Renwang jing* rubric of true, conventional, and absolute truths.[88] To carry the process of analogy further, the oscillation in Zhiyi's work between separation and synthesis reflects the political as well as doctrinal dilemmas caused by the ever-burgeoning Chinese Saṅgha and Dharma. Rulers and monks alike were grappling with forces beyond the institutional control of either state or Saṅgha, demonstrated by the messianic Buddhist uprisings in the fifth and sixth centuries. As noted in the previous chapter, Nattier has suggested that *mofa* sensibility seems linked to anxiety over the rapid growth of the power of the clergy rather than to the ephemeral persecutions of Buddhism. The *Renwang jing* was clearly found to be helpful in the ongoing process of negotiating a balance between secular and clerical power. As Orzech says: "Rather than being a clumsy attempt of the 'church' at currying favor with the 'state," the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* is a skillful presentation of a vision of the world in which the major institutions of the time -- court and Buddhist church, layman and monk -- were part of a single salvific process. . . ."[89]

[87] Orzech 1989: 21-22.

[88] Donner and Stevenson 1993: 10.

[89] Orzech 1989: 18.

The *Renwang jing* was revived again as part of the state cult during Bao Tang Wuzhu's lifetime. It was "retranslated" and promoted by Bukong 不空 (Amoghavajra, 705-774), the revered Tantric monk who served three Tang emperors. Bukong's version incorporates esoteric rites and dhāraṇī, and these rites were performed at court in 765 in an attempt to effect repulsion of the Tibetans. In the rite, the ritual master assumes the wrathful manifestation of the Buddha to subdue the invaders and then ritually confers upon them an abhiṣeka initiation, which is the culmination of the bodhisattva path.[90]

Western Sichuan was part of this theater of war and the movements of troops deployed against the Tibetans forms part of the backdrop for the *Lidai fabao ji*. It is likely that the Bao Tang school was aware of the ascendancy of esoteric Buddhism at court, and so the *Lidai fabao ji* passage featuring Wuzhu's victory in Dharma dialogue with Tantric masters may have been a veiled criticism of Bukong's influence. However, one need not single out a particular passage in order to understand that the Bao Tang's formless practice would be inimical to Tantrism. The "Southern School" principle of the excluded middle was the doctrinal antithesis of the *Renwang jing* enactment of interdependent truth in a salvific continuum embracing both ruler and monk. The Bao Tang were attuned to a version of *mofa* in which a "crisis of signs" was revealed not in the inversion of Saṅgha and state, but in the inversion of true and false transmission within the Saṅgha.

Imaginary Cultic Robes

In this section I will return to the works of the early Tang master Daoxuan, who

[90] Orzech 1996: 373 and 1989: 23. There is also a striking later example of syncretism between these elements and Chan. In the twelfth century "Dali Scroll" from Yunnan (*Daliguo Fanxiang juan* 大理國梵像卷, Picture of Buddhist Images from the Country of Dali), the sixteen kings of the *Renwang jing*, the Chan patriarchs, and Tantric deities are arranged in a sequence that has an image of Maitreya the central icon. Thus the Chan patriarchs were assimilated into a pantheon of national security icons. See Berger 1994: 97. A ninth century Dali ruler is also included in the Chan lineage. See Li Lin-ts'an 1982: 96, panel 55; see also Chapin 1971.

serves in this narrative as a link between the previous section on Buddhism of the Sui court and the subsequent section on the emergence of the "proto-Chan" East Mountain School and the Southern-Northern School controversy. This linkage is not meant as a chain of direct influence; in the manner of the "eminent monk" hagiographies, well-known figures such as Zhiyi and Daoxuan become something like "master functions" around which distinctive elements of a more amorphous discourse may collect and by which the discourse may be limited.[91] Here I will focus on Daoxuan's vision of the transcendent level of true Dharma transmission.

I am indebted to Koichi Shinohara for inspiration for the section title and for his fascinating exposition of some of Daoxuan's later works. In his articles "Imaginary Cultic Objects in the Gods' Instructions to Daoxuan (596-597)" and "Imagining the Jetavana in Medieval China: An Exploratory Discussion of Daoxuan's Jetavana Diagram Scripture," Shinohara discusses records of a series of visions or a single prolonged vision that Daoxuan experienced.[92]

In the last several years of his life, Daoxuan was deeply involved in constructing an ordination platform at the Jingye 淨業 temple in the Zhongnan 終南 mountains southwest of Changan. Daoxuan's visionary experiences, his completion of the platform, and the first ordination ceremony at the site all took place in 667, the year of his death. This confluence of vision and construction shaped subsequent Buddhist practice; as John

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[91] "Master function" is a coinage based on Michel Foucault's discussion of the "author function." See Foucault 1979, in Rabinow, ed., 1984: 101-120. Foucault writes: "The author allows a limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations within a world where one is thrifty not only with one's resources and riches, but also with one's discourses and their significations. The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning." *Ibid.*, p. 118. Similarly, one may view the notion of "master" as a principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning in Buddhist discourse. Figures such as Zhiyi or Daoxuan serve as "founders of discursivity" establishing the possibility of a certain realm of discourse, and also serve as "necessary or constraining" figures, establishing certain limitations and standards for that realm of discourse. *Ibid.*, p. 114 *sq*. For discussion of a related issue, the proliferation and constraining of relics and representations of masters, see Faure 1991: 148-178.

[92] Publication forthcoming.

McRae says, "these events marked the beginning of a trend to establish ordination platforms and hold public ordination ceremonies that lasted at least through the eighth century and perhaps beyond."[93]

Daoxuan had been immersed in researching Buddhist texts for information on Jetavana and its ordination platform when he received his first vision.[94] In the vision, he is visited by the deity Zhang Qiong 張瓊, who is the son of the Vaidurya king of the Southern Heaven where the Dharma is upheld diligently. The deity assumes an ordinary human form and treats Daoxuan with the deference of a lay devotee towards a distinguished master. Zhang predicts that Daoxuan will soon die and will be received into the Fourth Heaven, i.e. Tuṣita. There he will be welcomed by Zhang's brother, who is a Buddhist scholar after Daoxuan's own heart. When Daoxuan hears that Zhang's brother has compiled a Jetavana Diagram Scripture, he is delighted and asks the visitor to describe the contents of the work to him. Zhang in turn admires Daoxuan's own work and praises his "effort to uphold traditions of holy sites and objects." He then begins to impart to Daoxuan information that he has on these subjects and Daoxuan rises from his sick-bed to write it all down. The deity ended up coming every day for several months, and Daoxuan wrote ten fascicles of material containing 3,800 items. It is said that "though the teaching was received from a god, it was still identical with what the Buddha taught."[95]

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[93] McRae, *Sudden Enlightenment and the Southern School: The Role of Ho-tse Shen-hui (684-758) in Ch'an Buddhism and Chinese History*, publication forthcoming, (2C 5-6). For a discussion of the physical characteristics of Daoxuan's platform and its antecedents, see *ibid.*, (2C 6-11).

[94] Jetavana was a royal garden in Kośala that was purchased by a rich merchant and given to the Buddha as a rainy season retreat. In the scriptures, it is the setting for many of the Buddha's sermons.

[95] There are several works that give an account of this vision describing the heavenly Jetavana. The passage above is found in Daoshi's 道世 *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (Jade Grove of the Dharma Garden), *T.* 53 (2122) 353c-355b. Shinohara has identified passages throughout the *Fayuan zhulin* that appear to be drawn from Daoxuan's writings related to his vision. These passages overlap with but are not entirely identical to three works attributed to Daoxuan: 1) the *Zhong Tianzhu Sheweiguo Zhihuansi tujing* 中天竺舍衛國祇桓寺圖經 (Diagram Scripture of the Jetavana in the Kingdom of Srāvastī in Central India), *T.* 45

The passage above is summarized from the account in the *Fayuan zhulin*, which was completed in 668 by Daoxuan's confrère Daoshi 道世. Shinohara argues that Daoshi, by placing the material based on Daoxuan's vision among Indian scriptural quotations rather than among miracle stories, accords it the status of a revelation equal to the scriptures.[96] The miraculous instructions passages are dispersed throughout the *Fayuan zhulin* according to topic, but they are purported to be from yet another work by Daoxuan and contain material not found in the extant works.[97]

The miraculous instructions are given as records of sermons by the Buddha, which follow a certain pattern. Each sermon takes place at a great assembly called together by Śākyamuni at some specific site and the time is also specified in relation to his enlightenment or nirvāṇa. The sermons consist of stories about the various objects that were entrusted to Śākyamuni by former Buddhas. These objects include items of use prescribed for the renunciant by the Vinaya, such as the robe, bowl, razor, water-sprinkler, etc., as well as enshrined relics of the former Buddhas and enshrined scriptures. Shinohara terms the narratives "cosmic histories of cultic objects." For each object, Śākyamuni tells the assembly how the object was presented by a deity (such as a nāga or an autochthonous spirit) who told him that he or she was enjoined by the Buddhas of the past to pass it on to Śākyamuni. Each object with its attendant deity appeared at a crucial moment in the course of Śākyamuni's path to enlightenment and it is understood that the same object was presented at parallel junctures in the careers of the previous Buddhas.

(1899); 2) the *Luxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (Traditions of Vinaya-related Miracles), *T*. 45 (1898); and 3) the *Daoxuan lushi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (Record of Miraculous Instruction Given to Vinaya Master Daoxuan), *T*. 52 (2107). There is another work by Daoxuan that is related to *T*. 45 (1899) but makes no mention of visionary instruction and may have been written prior to the experience. This is the *Guanzhong chuanli jietan tujing* 關中創立戒壇圖經 (Diagram Scripture on Establishing the Ordination Platform in Central China), *T*. 45 (1892). See Shinohara, forthcoming. ("Imaginary Cultic Objects," 1-4; "Imagining the Jetavana," 1-9, trans. 17-23). For a discussion of the transmission of a version of the text in Japan, see Forte 1988a: 51-52.

[96] Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imagining the Jetavana," 25).

[97] Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imaginary Cultic Objects," 2, 31 n. 2).

Once the story has been told, Sākyamuni provides for the enshrinement of the object in a stūpa, preserving the teaching during a future time when the true Dharma will be under attack.[98]

The instructions emphasize the importance of entrusting (*fuzhu* 付囑) the object to an intermediary guardian who will entrust it to the next Buddha.[99] The following passage describes Śākyamuni's reception of his predecessor's robe:

> The World-Honored One told Manjuśrī and the great assembly: "When I left the palace and entered the mountains to train in the Way, I put aside my priceless jewelled clothes and put on clothing made of deer skin. A Tree Deity appeared holding a *saṃghāṭi* robe in his hand, and he said to me, 'Prince Siddhārtha, your present cultivation of the Way will certainly result in correct awakening. In the past when Kāśyapa [Buddha] entered nirvāṇa, he entrusted this *saṃghāṭi* large robe to me. He ordered me to guard it well until you, humane one, should appear in the world. He ordered me to pass it on to Siddhārtha.' When I was about to receive the large robe, the ground moved greatly. The Tree Deity said, 'I will now open the robe and display the characteristicss of the merit-field for you.' The Tree Deity opened the robe and I saw the characteristics of the merit-field, whereupon I entered the Vajrasamādhi (Adamantine concentration). The ground moved greatly once more. The Tree Deity spoke again, 'You are still a lay person, not yet fit to wear this Dharma-robe. You ought to place it on top of your head to offer it respect.'"[100]

There are numerous points of interest here in light of previous discussions. The

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[98] The structure is clearly influenced by another of Daoxuan's interests, the traditions regarding Aśoka's stūpas. In the *Aśokāvadāna* it is related how Aśoka visits the sites of the life of the Buddha, and at each site there is an object that Aśoka then enshrines in veneration. Upon this motif of enshrinement, Daoxuan builds a more complex narrative of entrusting and preserving the Dharma through the eons by means of the objects used by the Buddhas. See Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imaginary Cultic Objects," 26-27).

[99] Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imaginary Cultic Objects," 5-7).

[100] *Fayuan zhulin*, *T.* 53 (2122) 560a29-b9.

prince discards his robes for animal skin, an alternative scriptural trope for impure clothing, which is at the same time more fitting than his courtly clothing. In contrast to both, the *saṃghāṭi* robe is the one worn when expounding the Dharma. This robe has in fact contained all the teachings of all the Buddhas, thus the exposure of the merit-field (*futian* 福田) is a revelation of the matrix of the Buddha-Dharma.[101] Although Śākyamuni is preordained to receive the robe, until he is enlightened/ordained he must wear it on his head rather than his back. All these types of clothing and unclothing refer to contrasting notions of "fit," taking sartorial measure of spiritual progress.

The counterpoint to Śākyamuni's reception of the robe is his relinquishing of it. The following passage describes the Buddha entrusting the *saṃghāṭi* robe, which is to be his last act before entering nirvāṇa:

> The Buddha told Manjuśrī and the eight divisions of the assembly, including monks, gods, and dragons: "This is Kāśyapa Buddha's *saṃghāṭi* robe made of coarse cloth and it has great power. I see with the Buddha-eye that gods, dragons, demons and spirits and even tenth-*bhūmi* bodhisattvas would be unable to move this great robe so much as a hair. Unless one is a Tathāgata one is unable to hold this robe-stūpa." The Buddha circumambulated the ordination platform three times, faced south and ascended the western stairs to the ordination platform, and facing west he turned northwards until he stood facing the north. The World-Honored One threw the robe-stūpa into the air. The robe-stūpa spread light everywhere and illumined billions of lands. All the sufferings of the inferior realms of rebirth were removed by the light, and they became like heavenly trees in the land of subtle bliss. (There follows an episode in which the Buddhas of the ten directions donate their robes and Māra builds stūpas for them all, then the Buddha has Manjuśrī summoned to receive his last instructions.) . . . . The Buddha told Manjuśrī and the great assembly who had gathered, "I now [enter] nirvāṇa and wish to entrust to you the stūpa of Kāśyapa

[101] For a discussion of the womb symbology of the robe, see Faure 1995: 361-364.

> Buddha's robe to maintain the Dharma that I hand down. After I enter nirvāṇa, bring the stūpa of Kāśyapa's robe to my ordination platform and place it at the north side for twelve years."[102]

The Buddha then predicts that during this twelve year period a king will reign who will put faith in evil Hīnayāna monks and destroy the true Dharma, and the followers of Mahāyāna will be persecuted and murdered. Manjuśri is then to gather the martyrs' robes into the robe-stūpa and convey the survivors to safety. The Buddha's instructions to Manjuśrī are as follows:

> "Under the reign of the evil king when the correct Dharma is destroyed, you should use your supernatural power to take up the robe-stūpa and travel through that kingdom. The Mahāyāna teachings are contained within the stūpa. Those monks who upheld the precepts and were murdered by the king each had a *saṃghāṭi* robe that they received according to the Dharma, and you should place these inside the stūpa of my robe. Those monks who uphold the precepts and yet live you should use your supernatural power to place in safety at the top of Mt. Sumeru."[103]

The narratives of the *saṃghāṭi* robe and the other objects embody both the diachrony and synchrony of the teachings of the past, present, and future Buddhas. As with the *Fu fazang zhuan* stories, the Dharma is perennially imperiled yet ultimately inviolable. The notion of "diagram scripture" that recurs throughout these writings captures the complex interplay of time and space through which the simultaneity of history (scripture) and timelessness (diagram or map) is expressed. The histories of the objects establish locations and events in Śākyamuni's path to enlightenment within a cosmic repeating pattern of Buddhahood. The histories are given within a framing narrative of the sites of

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[102] *Fayuan zhulin*, *T*. 53 (2122) 560b28-c23.

[103] *Ibid.*, *T*. 53 (2122) 560c29-561a5.

Śākyamuni's sermons and the entrusting of the object with reference to his nirvāṇa and the decline of his Dharma. When Śākyamuni has entered nirvāṇa the enshrined objects are to be guarded at such potent locations as Manjuśrī's abode at Mt. Qingliang 清涼, or the palace of a nāga-king, or Jetavana itself.

Jetavana is evoked within the different levels of the narrative, functioning as the site of some of the sermons as well as the repository of some of the enshrined objects. It is also the meta-level, the heavenly Jetavana, which is a cosmic maṇḍala or diagram of all the sites and a reliquary of all the sermon-histories. It is centered upon the ordination platform, the location of the enshrined robe and the ritual site of both eternal preservation of the Dharma and the recurring preservation of the Dharma through an individual's reception and maintenance of the precepts. Shinohara notes the confluences between Daoxuan's "Jetavana Diagram Scripture" and his "Ordination Platform Diagram Scripture," i.e. between his last vision and his last project. Shinohara says: "In this larger context, Daoxuan's maṇḍala, explaining how the true teaching had been expounded by past, present, and future Buddhas, was also to be read as a diagram that showed how others could take part in this story through ordination."[104]

The ordination platform and robe are the primary sites of protection of the Dharma and are by the same token the primary sites of decay, for the clergy who do not keep the precepts are the cause of the Dharma's decline: "The Buddha told the monks, 'This *saṃghāṭi* of mine was worn by all the Buddhas of past and future to attain liberation. In the future evil monks will not uphold the [rules regarding the] three robes, and also in not keeping [other] precepts they dishonor the Dharma robe. They cause the Dharma to be quickly destroyed.'"[105]

As we have seen, the warning knell against false clergy sounds throughout Chinese

[104] Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imagining the Jetavana," 48).

[105] *Fayuan zhulin*, *T.* 53 (2122) 562c26-28.

Buddhist works of the fifth and sixth centuries. Moreover, in Daoxuan's talismania we may hear echoes of the intense contemporary rivalry with Daoists over ritual authority in the Tang state cult, but it is beyond the scope of the present study to examine this question adequately.[106] For our purposes the most striking notes in Daoxuan's miraculous instructions resonate with developments yet to come, namely the complex of meanings that accrue to the robe of liberation and the ordination platform in eighth century Chan.

Shinohara considers it likely that Shenhui's doctrine of the patriarchal robe was influenced by the passages about robes in Daoxuan's miraculous instructions. Shinohara cites Shenhui's references to the robe of liberation and his likening it to Śākyamuni's gold-embroidered robe that Mahākāśyapa holds in trust for Maitreya at Mt. Kukkuṭapāda. Even though the motif of the gold-embroidered robe comes from a separate legend (to which we will return), Shinohara believes that the motif of the robe as emblem of the true transmission has been transmitted from Daoxuan to Shenhui. Moreover, he notes Yanagida's suggestion that a comment by Huizhong 慧忠 (d. 775) in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* is critical of "Southern School" appropriation of Daoxuan's "Platform Scripture."[107] Huizhong's criticism is as follows:

> Recently I travelled about, and I met many of this sort. Lately they have been especially numerous. At an assembly of three-hundred and fifty people, [I heard that kind of] "mine eyes have seen the Milky Way" bragging: "This is the Southern Doctrine." [Someone has] substituted another "Platform Scripture," added an assortment of vulgar boasts and cut away the holy meaning to delude and confuse later disciples. Have these come to be words of teaching? Bitterly indeed I mourn the doctrine![108]

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[106] See Seidel 1983:291-371.

[107] Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imaginary Cultic Objects," 27-30).

[108] *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *T.* 51 (2076) 437c29-438a4.

Yanagida argues that as the *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經 (Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch, commonly known as the *Platform Sūtra*)[109] was probably not in existence at the time of Huizhong's lament, we may surmise that he was complaining about Shenhui's *Tanyu* 壇語 (Platform Address).[110] To a State Preceptor (*guoshi* 國師) such as Huizhong, liberties taken with Daoxuan's divinely-inspired writings must indeed have seemed grievous, yet perhaps his interest in the matter was not entirely exegetical. Huizhong and Shenhui were both disciples of Huineng, and both were closely associated with temples in Nanyang 南陽 such that both were assigned this toponym. In the biographies of Huineng's disciples in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, Huizhong and Shenhui are side by side as the last two entries.[111]

Huizhong was invited to be an imperial preceptor by the Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756-762) and was also favored by Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-779). He appears in the famous *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄 (Blue Cliff Record) koan collection upholding Chan traditions by attempting unsuccessfully to enlighten these emperors, but he was not so laconic about it as Bodhidharma had been.[112] As a disciple of Huineng, Huizhong was a candidate for the position of seventh patriarch, which as we shall see was a delicate issue. However, as with the earlier pairs Bodhidharma-Sengchou and Huike-Tanlin, in the end the prize of patriarchy was posthumously awarded (by an emperor) to the monk who had

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[109] *Liuzu tan jing* is an abbreviated title. For a textual history of this work, see Yanagida 1974: 459.

[110] See Yanagida 1985: 407-408. The full title of the text of Shenhui's address is: *Nanyang heshang dunjiao jietuo chanmen zhiliao xing tanyu* 南陽和上頓教解脱禪門直了性壇語 (The Platform Address of the Venerable of Nanyang on Directly Comprehending the Nature According to the Chan Approach of Emancipation in the Sudden Teaching). Hereafter abbreviated *Tanyu*. *Ca*. 720. Dunhuang ms: a) Beijing han 81, in *Suzuki Daisetsu zenshū* 3, 1968: 290-317; b) P. 2045 (part 2) in Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 225-252. Liebenthal, trans., 1952; McRae, forthcoming. For an overview of Shenhui's works, see Yampolsky 1967: 24-25 n. 67.

[111] Biographies of Huizhong appear in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T*. 50 (2061) 762b-763b and the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *T*. 51 (2076) 244a-245a.

[112] *Biyan lu*, *T*. 48 (2003) Cases 18 & 99, Cleary, trans., 1977: vol. I pp. 115-122 & vol. II pp. 628-635.

not been admitted to the inner circle at court, namely Shenhui.

According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Huizhong's espousal of "Southern School" doctrines was rather moderate: "When he discussed the sudden he left no traces; when he spoke of the 'gradual' he returned to the conventional and yet was in accord with the Way."[113] If it is the case that Huizhong's criticisms were directed at Shenhui's *Tanyu* then his reaction may perhaps tell us something about Huineng's "sudden" teaching. Chan scholars have recognized that the latter is unrecoverable except as reflected and embellished by the "Southern School" sects, including the Bao Tang. Huizhong, however, may point to a sudden teaching in which "holy meanings," such as revelations of the Buddha's sermons imparted by a deity, were not yet tarred with the brush of the gradual and that brush was not yet so black. Moreover, this imaginary sudden teaching was not yet so popular and thus was not over-burdened with "vulgar boasts" arising from doctrinal-genealogical rivalries. Such speculations inevitably revert to an "aborescent model," suggesting an original simplicity and unity -- and there, out on a limb, we must leave them.

Shenhui's *Tanyu* is a step towards the elevation of the *Platform Sūtra*, the latter being the first work in which the teachings of a Chinese master, Huineng, are accorded the status of scripture equal to the Buddha's sermons. Specifically Chan ordination platforms, including Shenhui's and Huineng's, will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Shenhui's was not the first step onto the formless platform, however. The first step is perhaps as unattainable for us as for Zhiyi's hapless Dharma master, but we may safely step back to Daoxuan's "Jetavana Diagram Scripture." Daoxuan's work (in its several versions) retained the format and linguistic style of a translated Indian scripture, but with the majestically transparent confidence of inspiration Daoxuan also reveals his seventh century Chinese Buddhist milieu throughout. His eschatological *mofa*

[113] *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2061) 762c4-5, Kieschnick, trans., forthcoming.

is more Chinese than Indian. His divine messenger Zhang is the son of "the Vaidurya king of the Southern Heaven" but he has thoroughly Chinese official duties. And the *saṃghāṭi* robe of the Buddhas is enshrined at the ordination platform of the heavenly Jetavana, symbolizing protection of the Dharma in all realms alike. Precisely because his milieu was so imbued with Indian concepts and images, Daoxuan brings us a vision in which India and China are truly joined in the non-discriminating realm of the Dharma.

Patriarchal Prototypes

In Daoxuan's Jetavana, the robe is a talisman that contributes to the creation of a matrix of power sustaining the Dharma. Daoxuan was a Vinaya master, and so for him the Buddha's *saṃghāṭi* robe is the guarantor and protector of every precept-keeping monk's robe. Robe and precepts together maintain the "merit-field" through which the Dharma is made manifest. Daoxuan's "cosmic history of cultic objects" places the vexed human history of the Buddhist order within a redeeming context.

Faure has treated the Vinaya monastic robe tradition of Daoxuan and Yijing 義淨 (635-713) and the Chan tradition which takes the robe as a symbol of transmission as two independent traditions.[114] Yet the Jetavana robe and Bodhidharma's, both imaginary cultic objects within imagined histories, reflect the importance given to talismanic objects within the grand design of preservation and continuity of transmission. Rather than argue for a particular textual influence from Daoxuan to Shenhui, although it may well have existed, I would attribute this correspondence between them to the influence of their *zeitgeist*, and suggest that both draw from a common cultural logic of how things are enabled to continue as they were and should be.

By way of illustrating this common logic, I will return to the work of Anna Seidel.

[114] Faure 1995: 343. For seventh century Vinaya traditions of the robe, see discussions in the Daoxuan-influenced *Fayuan zhulin*, *T.* 53 (2122) and Yijing's *Nanhai-qiguinei fazhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳 (Transmission of the Dharma in the Southern Archipelago), *T.* 54 (2125), Takakusa, trans., [1896] 1966.

Seidel made a masterful analysis of the functioning of Daoist and imperial talismans in her classic article, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments; Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha." She describes the interplay between the Daoist priesthood and the Chinese imperium through the Han and Six Dynasties, and her work has been inspiring to me in my own study of Buddhist-imperial relations. She argues that reflection of the imperial cult was fundamental to the constitution of "Daoism": "Their very creed was based on a revelation homologous with the manifestation of the Mandate of Heaven, their priests were empowered by sacred objects homologous with the auspicious portents legitimizing Chinese sovereignty, and their ultimate concern was identical to that of the ruler: Great Peace. . . . A Taoist who transmits registers to an emperor does so as a member of and an emissary from the same spiritual hierarchy from which the Son of Heaven derives his mandate."[115]

She further argues that the mediating role that Daoist priests played was crucial for the state: "The public for their legitimizing pronouncements was not the Confucian elite -- always intent on restricting the absolute power and religious aura of the Son of Heaven -- but the lower reaches of society where the myth of the God Emperor was alive. By exalting the God Emperor, the Taoist priests were nurturing a potent myth -- and this was nothing less than the force which held the vast Chinese empire together."[116]

At the same time, after the destruction of the Celestial Masters Daoist kingdom in Sichuan at the end of the Han and "apart from rebel movements" (an important caveat), the Daoist priesthood remained dependent on the imperium, not the other way around: "The very fact that the Taoist priest served a celestial hierarchy in which the Son of Heaven had his hallowed place, prevented Taoism from ever assuming a spiritual authority against the empire as in the medieval Christian dispute between spiritual and

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[115] Seidel 1983: 368.

[116] *Ibid.*

worldly power."[117]

Eighth century Chan Buddhists appear to be doing something very similar to what Seidel demonstrates that Daoists were doing in the Han -- availing themselves of an imperial logic of authority and proceeding as if their derivation was in fact essence. Elsewhere, Seidel discusses claims of imperial recognition of Huineng's robe found in the *Caoqi dashi biezhuan* and the *Jingde chuandeng lu*: "Thus, the Southern School, in an undoubtedly fabricated imperial proclamation, gave to the vestment the prestige of a national treasure. This served not only to demonstrate imperial approval of the Southern School, but placed the vestment in the class of sacred objects, tokens of sovereign power."[118]

Unlike the Daoists, however, Chinese Buddhists had repeatedly tried to create a place from which to assume spiritual authority not against, but independent from the empire. This independence is the crux of the love-hate relationship between Saṅgha and state that I have attempted to portray -- although popular Buddhist messianic movements were perceived as a serious threat and the involvement of monks and nuns in court politics was a continual source of friction, the greatest danger of a Buddhist coup d'état stemmed from the emperors and empresses themselves. The Chan ideology of patriarchy intensified the struggle by articulating a source of spiritual authority independent of both state and Saṅgha, at the same time as it depended upon a blend of imperial and Buddhist symbols of legitimacy.

In order to trace the development of the Chan concept of patriarchy, in this section I will be focussing on "proto-Chan" material prior to Shenhui. The seventh and early eighth centuries encompass the appearance of key elements of the Chan transmission mystique. Bodhidharma and Huike became associated with a special "*Laṅkā*"

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[117] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

[118] Seidel, forthcoming, "Den'e."

(*Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*) transmission, which was coupled with the so-called "East Mountain" succession. The notion of patriarchal succession became more precise in theory and more detailed as various versions of the sequencing, biographies, and doctrines of the patriarchs were advanced. We will see Bodhidharma's talismanic robe prefigured in the lore of the East Mountain school and we will also see overt reference to patriarchal succession as a counterpart to dynastic succession. All of this has been the subject of much scholarship in recent decades, yet in spite of the inevitable redundancy of what follows, one must traverse this well-travelled ground in order to pick up the trail of the patriarchal robe.

An early source for the notion of a *Laṅkā* transmission from Bodhidharma to Huike is the biography of Fachong 法沖 (587-665?) in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.[119] This biography of a contemporary is one of Daoxuan's later additions to the work, and Daoxuan concludes the biography by assuming that Fachong is still living. The biography has some stories of miraculous powers, one of Daoxuan's favorite themes in his later years, but it is mostly taken up by an account of persons involved in *Laṅkā* transmission, among whom Huike's descendents are considered primary. The biography praises Guṇabhadra's initial translation of the scripture and says that Bodhidharma later transmitted it as well. It is said that Huike and Huiyu 惠育 (a.k.a. Daoyu) were the two recipients of Bodhidharma's teaching on the *Laṅkā*, but Huiyu remained silent about it and only Huike had disciples. Among Huike's disciples who are said to have left no written works there are eight names, including a Dhyana master Can 粲.[120] Four additional disciples are said to have produced texts on the *Laṅkā*. Then there is a list of *Laṅkā* commentators who

[119] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 666a3-c24. For fuller discussion of *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biographies and *Laṅkā* transmission, see Hu Shih 1935; Yanagida 1967: 19-30; McRae 1986: 24-29; and Faure 1989: 42-53.

[120] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 666b15. This a variant of the second character in the name of Huike's disciple in the eventual Chan lineage, Sengcan 僧璨. See McRae 1986: 280-281 n. 40.

were distantly connected or unconnected with Huike, and an account of his disciple's disciples. The lists conclude with a comment in small characters: "They successively transmitted the lamp down to the present dissemination."[121] Daoxuan uses this term "transmission of the lamp" in other instances as well, but unlike its use in later Chan, here it obviously does not mean exclusive serial transmission.

There is some foreshadowing of the later notion of a special "mind-to-mind" transmission, however. Throughout Fachong's biography it is stressed that the essence of the *Laṅkā* transmission is wisdom that does not depend on words, and there is a flavor of esoteric transmission. There are references to people not understanding it or understanding it incorrectly, and it is said that though Fachong produced a commentary, he did so reluctantly. However, he is praised for lecturing on it two hundred times and quoting from it freely. Thus, the biography displays an appreciation both for esoteric transmission from a master to select disciples and for conventional exoteric *upāyas* such as translations, lectures, and commentaries. In support of convention, there is an episode at the end wherein Fachong purportedly castigates Xuanzang for not allowing anyone to lecture on old translations of the sūtras, only on (Xuanzang's) new translations. Fachong tells Xuanzang that since he was ordained on the basis of the old translations, he ought to return to lay status and then get re-ordained on the basis of new translations. This causes Xuanzang to desist.[122]

As Faure points out, Fachong and the group he is identified with appear to be distinguished from both the traditional *Laṅkā*-related Dilun school of Bodhiruci *et al.* and from Xuanzang's Yogācāra reformation.[123] Furthermore, Fachong's biography and the

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[121] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 666b24. Daoxuan uses the metaphor of the "transmission of the lamp" to refer to other successions as well, and in his usage more than one disciple can receive transmission of the lamp from the same master.

[122] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 666c17-19.

[123] Faure 1989: 47-48.

latter part of Huike's biography show similar tendencies and affiliations. Hu Shih notes that the latter half of Huike's shows evidence of having been supplemented after the initial completion of the text, so that it could have been added at the same time as Fachong's biography.[124] Huike's biography states that he left no successors and then immediately goes on to give biographies of other figures, some of whom are clearly successors, and some of whom are also mentioned in Fachong's biography.[125] There are consistent themes in both biographies, such as *dhūta* practice, doctrinal conservatism, and devaluation of exegesis. Moreover, the latter part of Huike's biography contains the famous passage in which Bodhidharma gives Huike the four-*juan Laṅkā* and says: "I observe that in the land of Han there is only this scripture. The benevolent one who relies [on it] to practice will himself be able to save the world."[126] It is then said that Huike handed down this "abstruse principle" (*xuanli* 玄理). However, Huike also makes a prediction that the *Laṅkā* transmission will degenerate: "After four generations, this scripture will be transformed into [mere] names and characteristics. How lamentable!"[127]

In the classic form of the Chan lineage the next recipient of the transmission would be Sengcan 僧璨 (d. *ca*. 606), but the question of whether or not the various mentions of a Can or Sengcan in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* can be identified with the Chan patriarch remains vexed.[128] There is however a biography for the future fourth Chan patriarch Daoxin 道信 (580-651), with no mention of Bodhidharma, Huike, or the *Laṅkā* transmission.[129] As he is about to die, Daoxin is asked about his successor and replies,

[124] Hu Shih 1935: 211-212, *Lengqie zongkao* 楞伽宗考, included in the anthology of his works edited by Yanagida, 1975: 153-195.

[125] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552a27 *sq*.

[126] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552b20-22.

[127] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 552b29-c1.

[128] See McRae 1986: 280-282 n. 40.

[129] *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2060) 606b2-28; McRae, trans., 1986: 31-32.

"Throughout my life I have entrusted [the Dharma] to many."[130]

An important document for reconstructing the further development of the Chan patriarchy is the obituary of Faru 法如 (638-689).[131] On the basis of a quotation from Huiyuan's *Chanjing* preface, it is said that the transmission of the Buddha inherited in turn by Ānanda, Madhyāntika, and Śāṇvāsa and subsequent obscure generations was brought by Bodhidharma to China.[132] Also striking is the subsequent succession from Bodhidharma to Ke, Can, Xin, and Ren (Hongren 弘忍 (602-674)), with Faru as Hongren's heir. Moreover, Hongren is designated for the first time as a "patriarchal master" (*zushi* 祖師).[133]

The transmission is without words, sudden, and esoteric: "In India they passed it down from one to another, from the origin without the written word. Those who enter this gate transmit only mind (*yi* 意) to each other."[134] This esoteric transmission has hidden but extensive soteriological efficacy: "The many [beings], in the moment it takes to bend and extend one's arm, immediately attain the original mind (*xin* 心). The Master takes the one-seal Dharma and secretly seals the minds (*yi* 意) of the many."[135]

In Faru's obituary there is no mention of a *Laṅkā* transmission, but an eulogy written in 725 for Faru's disciple Yuangui 元珪 cites the same lineage and mentions reliance on the *Laṅkā-sūtra*. However, the transmission itself is identified with one-practice samādhi, which as we shall see was characteristic of East Mountain school transmission. "As to

[130] *Ibid.*, *T.* 50 (2060) 606b22.

[131] *Tang zhongyue shamen Shi Faru chanshi xingzhuang* 唐中岳沙門釋法如禪師行狀 (Epitaph for the Tang [Dynasty] Śramaṇa of the Central Peak, Dhyāna Master Shi Faru), in *Jinshi xubian* 金石續編 vol. 6, p. 2a-b. Annotated edition in Yanagida 1967: 487-496. See also McRae 1986: 85-86; Faure 1989: 54.

[132] On Huiyuan's preface, see the section on Buddhabhadra in Chapter Two.

[133] Yanagida 1967: 487-488.

[134] *Ibid.*, p. 487.

[135] *Ibid.*, p. 489.

this one-practice samādhi, in India by mind they transmitted it to each other, from the outset without written teachings." Yuangui is said to be the seventh generation of the transmission in China, and "all are Dharma lords in different generations at one time."[136]

Perhaps the most influential text related to Faru's line is the *Chuan fabao ji* 傳法寶紀 (Annals of the Transmission of the Dharma-Jewel) by Du Fei 杜朏, written *ca.* 713.[137] It has the same sequence as the obituary for Faru: the *Chanjing* Indian lineage followed by biographies of Bodhidharma, Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, Hongren and Faru, and then Shenxiu 神秀 (d. 706) is added as the final of seven successive biographies. However, Shenxiu is not presented as Faru's heir, but as a less senior heir of Hongren who defers to Faru: "When Dhyana Master [Hung]-jen died, [Shen-hsiu] said: 'There is a previous transmission.' Therefore he did not transmit the Dharma for over ten years."[138]

Both Shenhui and the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s quote from the *Chuan fabao ji* and were clearly influenced by its elitist and anti-scriptural, anti-formalist tendencies, though Shenhui also takes issue with the lineage it presents. The *Chuan fabao ji* continues in the same esoteric vein of the Faru epitaph, denigrating discursive teaching and emphasizing the secrecy of the Dharma transmission. Du Fei takes care to distinguish the masters from the ordinary practitioners and relegates meditational-devotional practice to the lesser level:

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136 *Da Tang Zhongyue dong Xianjusi gu dade Gui heshang ji dechuang* 大唐中嶽東閑居寺故大德珪和尚紀德幢 (Banner Recording the Virtue of the Tang Late Worthy Reverend Gui of East Xianju Monastery on Zhongyue). In *Baqiongshi jinshi buzheng* 八瓊室金石補正, vol. 3, 53, pp. 903a-904b. Included in Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望, ed., *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 (A New Edition of Historical Materials Carved on Stone) Series I & II 1966, Series III, 1986. Taibei: Xinwenfeng. Vol. 7: 4849a-4850b. Broughton, trans., unpublished "Proto-Chan Texts," pp. 148.

137 *T.* 85 (2838). Dunhuang ms. P. 2634, P. 3858, P. 3559 (only complete ms.) Annotated Japanese translation in Yanagida 1971: 327-435, annotated English translation in McRae 1986: 255-269. See also Yanagida 1969: 47-57 & 1971: 3-45; McRae 1986: 86-88; Faure 1989: 65-67. On dating the text, see Yanagida 1967: 48.

138 *Chuan fabao ji*, Yanagida 1971: 396, McRae, trans., 1986: 265.

During the lifetimes of [Hung]-jen, [Fa]-ju, and Ta-t'ung (= Shenhsiu), the teachings were opened up to great [numbers of students] without regard to abilities. [These students] were all immediately made to recite the name of the Buddha (*nien fo-ming*). [Those who could be] made to demonstrate [the nature of] the Pure Mind in intimate [conference with the master] were thus qualified to receive transmission of the Dharma, but this [was an eventuality] to be treasured in secret by both master and disciple. [Such transmissions] were never publicly announced.[139]

The *Laṅkā* theme surfaces again, although it is no longer the content and not yet the symbol of Dharma transmission. Du Fei quotes the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and uses the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* passage in which Bodhidharma praises the scripture and gives it to Huike. However, he criticizes Daoxuan's inclusion of Bodhidharma's "wall-contemplation" (*biguan* 壁觀) practice and the teachings of the *Erru sixing lun*, saying that these reflect merely the provisional level of Bodhidharma's transmission.[140] Du Fei also twice repeats Huike's prediction from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* that after four generations the understanding of the *Laṅkā* will become superficial.[141] He introduces a new twist, however, with the story of Bodhidharma's poisoning.[142] This story reflects the rivalry between different *Laṅkā* factions that was evident in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, but it primarily serves to showcase the powers of Bodhidharma and his transmission. The poisoning story was further elaborated in *Lidai fabao ji*, as discussed earlier in this chapter.[143]

In comparing the *Chuan fabao ji* and the *Lengqie shizi ji*, Faure notes that the former

[139] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 420, McRae, trans., 1986: 268.

[140] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 355-356, McRae, trans., 1986: 259.

[141] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 365 & 420, McRae, trans., 1986: 261 & 269.

[142] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 360, McRae, trans., 1986: 259.

[143] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 180c26-181a4.

is less literary in style, less concerned with doctrine and focussed instead on the persona of the masters. He writes:

> In the *Chuan fabao ji*, what distinguishes Bodhidharma from other *dhyāna* practitioners is not the superiority of his doctrine or his practice but rather the fact that he had been invested with a sacred mission, to transmit the Dharma. This was a radically new point of view and appears to be specifically Chinese. . . . This almost sacramental nature of the Dharma results in the fact that those who possess it become exceptional beings: hence the emphasis placed by the *Chuan fabao ji* on legends about Bodhidharma and Huike.[144]

Indeed, in his preface Du Fei suggests that worship of these exceptional beings, like that rendered the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, may be a sufficient cause of enlightenment: "If it were not for the guidance of these perfect ones, it would be difficult to identify [the content of this teaching.] I believe that in the future, spiritual awakening will in some cases be based on the adoration [of former worthies.][145]

Before turning to the *Lengqie shizi ji*, let us take a brief glance at a text related to the *Chuan fabao ji*, the *Xiande ji yu shuangfeng shanta ke tan xuanli shier* 先德集於雙峰山塔各談玄理十二 (Twelve Former Worthies Gather at the Stūpa on Mt. Shuangfeng and Each Discusses the Mysterious Principle).[146] The premise of this short document is that twelve masters from the past gather at Hongren's stūpa and each speaks a verse on the theme of non-dual mind and no-thought. The format prefigures the transmission verses of the *Baolin zhuan*. The figures are not a succession of patriarchs but they are in roughly chronological order. The two names at the head of the list, Pārśva and

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[144] Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 7 p. 4-5).

[145] Yanagida 1971: 346, McRae, trans., 1986: 257.

[146] P. 3559, immediately following the *Chuan fabao ji*. In Yanagida 1963: 55. For discussion of the identities of the twelve worthies, see Yanagida 1963; McRae 1986: 84-85; Faure 1989: 54-55n. 97.

Aśvaghoṣa, appear in the *Lidai fabao ji* list of Indian patriarchs, as discussed in Chapter Three. The Neng 能 and Xiu 秀 included are presumably Huineng and Shenxiu, affording a glimpse of the harmony that prevailed before Shenhui made the two into rivals for Hongren's transmission.

Although the *Chuan fabao ji* sets forth the lineage of what would become known as the Dongshan 東山 or East Mountain tradition, the term itself first appears in other texts of roughly the same early eighth century vintage.[147] The name is derived from the location of Hongren's monastery but it is also retrospectively applied to Daoxin's teachings.[148] The *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 (Record of the Masters and Disciples of the *Laṅkā[vatāra-sūtra]*) is the main text in which the *Laṅkā* tradition and a distinct East Mountain affiliation and teaching are linked and promoted.[149] Reference to the East Mountain teaching occurs prominently in the section on Hongren: "The sixth, the Great Master posthumously called Hongren, of Youju 幽居 monastery on Mt. Shuangfeng of Qizhou in the Tang dynasty, was the successor of Chan Master Xin. The Dharma that Ren transmitted was the subtle Dharma, and when people praised it they called it the Pure Teaching of the East Mountain."[150]

The *Lengqie shizi ji* was written by the monk Jingjue 淨覺 (ca. 688-746), who incorporated within it an otherwise non-extant text by his teacher Xuanze 玄賾 (d.u.).

[147] Early use of the term is primarily associated with the *Lengqie shizi ji*, the subject of the following discussion, but see also Song Zhiwen's 宋之問 memorial about Shenxiu (in Yanagida 1967: 507) and Zhang Yue's 張説 epitaph for Shenxiu (in *ibid.*, pp. 497-516). The latter work also includes the same list of patriarchs as the *Chuan fabao ji*, except that Faru's name is omitted and so Shenxiu becomes the sixth patriarch.

[148] Hongren's monastery was located on the eastern of the Twin Peaks (Shuangfeng 雙峰) in Qizhou 蘄州, in modern Huangmei 黃梅, Hubei.

[149] *T.* 85 (2837). Dunhuang ms. P. 4564, P. 3294, P. 3537, P. 3436, P. 3703, S. 2054, S. 4272. Annotated edition and Japanese translation in Yanagida 1971: 47-326, annotated French translation in Faure 1989: 85-182. See also Yanagida 1967: 58-100 & 1971: 3-45; McRae 1986: 88-91; Faure 1989.

[150] *Lengqie shizi ji*, Yanagida 1971: 268, Faure, French trans., 1989: 161-162.

Xuanze was one of Hongren's disciples, and Jingjue clearly regards the East Mountain teaching as his own affiliation. The lineage presented by Jingjue varies slightly from previous lists. The most notable change is that the *Laṅkā* translator Guṇabhadra is the first patriarch and Bodhidharma is said to have received the transmission from him. As noted above, in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biography of Fachong a similar connection is made regarding scriptural transmission without any implication of special lineal Dharma transmission. Still, Jingjue's notion of succession, like Du Fei's and unlike Shenhui's, did not insist on only one Dharma-heir in each generation. In the *Lengqie shizi ji* the line of succession continues through Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, Hongren, and then in the biography of Shenxiu near the end of the work, Shenxiu, Laoan 老安 and Xuanze are named as the three principle heirs of Hongren. Hongren is also quoted as saying that only about ten people would transmit his teachings.[151]

This echoes a previous longer passage in Jingjue's biography of Hongren in which the patriarch evaluates his ten Dharma heirs. Reminiscent of the tradition of Confucius' ten disciples and his lament over Yan Hui's early death (except that in the *Lengqie shizi ji* the unknown departed prodigies are not included in the evaluation), Hongren says that all his best disciples died, and he gives mostly mixed reviews of the survivors.[152] Of the ten only Shenxiu and Laoan are commended without reservation. However, the master concludes by directly addressing Xuanze, the eleventh-hour disciple, saying, "Your

[151] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 295, Faure, French trans., 1989: 171. At the very end of the *Lengqie shizi ji* there is a passage on four disciples of Shenxiu in the eighth generation, and among the four is the master Puji 普寂, who would become the focus of Shenhui's most virulent criticisms. *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 320-321, Faure, French trans., 1989: 179-181. Faure discerns several layers in the composition of the *Lengqie shizi ji*, and surmises that this final passage may well be a later addition by a disciple of one of the eighth generation masters, see Faure, *ibid.*, p. 179 n. 1.

[152] The list of disciples is: Shenxiu, Zhishen, Liu Zhubu 劉主簿, Huizang 慧藏, Xuanyue 玄約, Laoan, Faru, Huineng, Zhide 智德, and Yifang 義方, see Yanagida 1971: 273. For Confucius' discussion of his disciples, see the *Analects*, Waley, trans., 1938: 153. I am indebted for this observation about disciples to Jeffrey Broughton's unpublished manuscript "Proto-Chan Texts," pp. 410-411 n. 42. Broughton also compares Hongren's evaluation to the trope of the ten great disciples of the Buddha.

conjoined practice [of dhyāna and Dharma] will take good care of you. After my nirvāṇa, you and Shenxiu should make the Buddha-sun shine once again and the mind-lamp doubly illuminating."[153] Jingjue quotes this version of Hongren's final words from Xuanze's work, the lost *Lengqie renfa zhi* 楞伽人法志, which may account for the impression that Xuanze's role is highlighted with a touch of modesty. Unlike Du Fei's promotion of Faru as taking precedence over Shenxiu, here Xuanze and Shenxiu are paired.[154] And when Hongren tests his disciple for the last time, Xuanze gently declines to make a brilliant showing: "On the sixteenth day of that month, [Hongren] asked, 'Do you now know my mind or not?' [I,] Xuanze respectfully answered, 'I do not know it.'"[155]

One notes immediately that although Huineng is included in the list of ten, he is characterized along with Faru and the Korean monk Zhide as fit to teach but "a person of only local distinction."[156] Furthermore, Zhishen of Zizhou 資州 who would later be included in the *Lidai fabao ji* lineage is very faintly praised, along with a layman, as "having a literary nature."[157] This, more than the ostensible point of the attack, may be why Jingjue becomes the subject of the following denunciation in the *Lidai fabao ji*.

> A śramaṇa of the Eastern Capital (Luoyang), Master Jingjue, who was the disciple of Chan Master Shenxiu of Yuquan 玉泉 [monastery], compiled the *Lengqie xumo shizi ji* 楞伽血脈師資記 (Record of the Lineage of the Masters and Disciples of the *Laṅkā[vatāra-sūtra]*) in one *juan*. He falsely alleged that the Trepiṭaka Guṇabhadra was the first patriarch. I do not

[153] *Lengqie shizi ji*, Yanagida 1971: 273, Faure, French trans., 1989: 166.

[154] It is significant that Jingjue considered both masters to be his teachers.

[155] *Lengqie shizi ji*, Yanagida 1971: 273, Faure, French trans., 1989: 167.

[156] *Dan yifang renwu* 但一方人物. Could also be translated as "a person of only one direction." *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 273, Faure, French trans., 1989: 166.

[157] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 273, Faure, French trans., 1989: 165.

> know his source, but he deluded and confused later students by saying [Guṇabhadra] was the Patriarchal Master Dharma's [i.e. Bodhidharma's] master. Guṇabhadra was from the first a scripture-translating Trepiṭaka and a student of the Lesser Vehicle, not a Chan Master. He translated the *Laṅkā-sūtra* in four *juan*, but he did not give an explanation of the *Laṅkā-sūtra* or transmit it to the Patriarchal Master Dharma. The Patriarchal Master Dharma, from the continuous line of direct transmission of the twenty-eight generations, inherited it from Saṅgharakṣa. Later at the Shaolin Monastery on Mt. Songgao 嵩高, the Great Master Huike personally asked Patriarchal Master Dharma about the succession of the direct transmission, and because there is this record [the matter] is clear. When this Master Jingjue falsely alleged that Guṇabhadra was the first patriarch he profoundly confused the study of the Dharma.[158]

Inclusion of Guṇabhadra notwithstanding, Shenhui and through him the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s owe much to Jingjue's conception of the patriarchy. Moreover, the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' indignation over spurious sources is clearly a case of the pot calling the kettle black. The *Lengqie shizi ji* remains in fact one of the few reliable sources that discuss the East Mountain lineage of the early eighth century.

The tradition of ten disciples of Hongren would be repeated in various Chan histories, but the names and ordering varied according to the affiliation of the authors. By the end of the eighth century there was general agreement that Huineng was the sixth patriarch and Shenxiu was relegated to the ranks of the lesser disciples. This is the case in the *Lidai fabao ji*, where the ten disciples are listed as Huineng, Shenxiu, Zhishen, Zhide, Xuanze, Laoan, Faru, Huizang, Xuanyue, and the layman Liu Zhubu. Huineng is set apart, and to the rest Hongren says "Although you never left my side, each of you is a single-dimensional master."[159] This assessment is mitigated in Zhishen's favor in another

[158] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 180b16-25.

[159] *Ibid*, *T*. 51 (2075) 182a29-182b3. Although for the *Lengqie shizi ji* Faure's reading of *yifang* 一方 as "local" is justifiable (see note 151), in the *Lidai fabao ji* it appears to be an observation along the

*Lidai fabao ji* passage in which Hongren's disciples Shenxiu, Xuanyue, Laoan and Xuanze are shown at a disadvantage in Wu Zetian's court, appearing to have only a conventional level of understanding in comparison to Zhishen.[160]

Jingjue presents what is probably a more accurate perspective not only of Zhishen but also of Laoan (582-709) (a.k.a. Huian 慧安). Laoan is important because contemporaries, including Wu Zetian, considered him equal in stature to Shenxiu.[161] He assumes particular significance in relation to the *Lidai fabao ji* because Zongmi would later assert that Wuzhu's true lineage was through a lay student of Laoan's named Chen Chuzhang 陳楚璋.[162] The *Lidai fabao ji* does include a passage praising Chen as Wuzhu's teacher, but this discipleship is portrayed as merely a first step along the way: "He (Wuzhu) chanced to meet the white-robed householder Chen Chuzhang. [Chen's] origins were unknown, but people then called him an incarnation of Vimalakīrti. He expounded the Dharma of the sudden teaching. From the day that he met the Venerable [Wuzhu], they were in private accord and understood one another, and [Chen] wordlessly transmitted the mind-Dharma."[163] It is said that "for three to five years [Wuzhu] practiced as a layman," and then he visited the master Zizai 自在 of Taiyuan 太原, who prevailed upon him to take the tonsure. Thereafter he began the peregrinations that would lead him eventually to Wuxiang.[164]

Jingjue's contemporaneous presentation of the relative standing of Hongren's disciples in the *Lengqie shizi ji* is an invaluable counterweight to version of Chan history that was to be "canonized" in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*. However, in tracing the theme of

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lines of Bodhidharma's comment that each disciple only got one part of him. As possession and division of relics is an important theme recurring throughout Buddhist history, these statements may also reflect recognition of the inevitable dilution of charisma, akin to the "decline of the Dharma" anxiety. This is the unease that Shenhui attempted to address with his "one generation one patriarch" claim.

[160] *Ibid*, *T*. 51 (2075) 184a25-b9. See further discussion of this passage in the "Robes Purple and Gold" section of this chapter.

[161] See Faure 1988: 51-55.

transmission of the robe, the most intriguing aspect of Jingjue's legacy is found not in the *Lengqie shizi ji*, but in the lay disciple Li Zhifei's 李知非 preface to Jingjue's commentary on the *Heart Sūtra*.[165]

The preface mentions Jingjue's aristocratic background and notes that he studied with Shenxiu, Huian (i.e. Laoan), and Xuanze. He is called a "transmission of the lamp disciple" (*chuandeng dizi* 傳燈弟子) of the latter, and then the same lineage as in the *Lengqie shizi ji* is listed: the six serial masters Guṇabhadra, Bodhidharma, Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, and Hongren plus Jingjue's three teachers in the seventh generation. This is followed by praise for Hongren and then this statement: "The fine cotton *kāṣāya*, water jar, begging bowl, and pewter [-ringed] staff that Great Master Ze had were all entrusted to Chan Master Jingjue."[166]

The specificity of the *kāṣāya* made of *mona* 摩納, fine cotton (or perhaps linen), is an interesting point. The *Caoqi dashi biezhuan* states that in the third year of the Shenlong 神龍 era (707), Wu Zetian sent a *mona kāṣāya* and five hundred rolls of silk to Huineng as an offering.[167] The *Lidai fabao ji* quotes this statement at the end of the story in which the empress gives Huineng's robe to Zhishen, but the date is changed to later in the same year (the eleventh month of the first year of the Jinglong 景龍 era, which began in the ninth month of 707).[168] In the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, on the other hand, it is said that in the third year of the Shenlong era Huian received a *mona* robe at court.[169] In the final

[162] *Yuanjue jing dashu chao*, *ZZ*. vol. 14: 278c-d.

[163] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 186a21-24.

[164] *Ibid*, *T*. 51 (2075) 186a24-c4.

[165] *Zhu banruopoluomiduo xin jing* 注般若波羅蜜多心經 (Commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra). Two copies are extant: S. 4556 and a recent copy of a privately held Dunhuang ms.; the copy is now in the Beijing University Library collection. For an annotated edition, see Yanagida 1967: 594-624.

[166] Yanagida 1967: 597.

[167] *ZZ*. vol. 146: 486b. See Yanagida 1967: 612.

section of this chapter we shall consider in more detail the role the empress may have played in causing a robe to be singled out as the object of transmission. The motif of a *mona* robe either given to or given by Hongren's disciples with a link to Wu Zetian's court may be considered one of the many threads from which the Chan patriarchal robe was woven.

In the preface to Jingjue's commentary we find juxtaposition of the notion of "transmission of the lamp disciple" and the motif of the master giving his personal Dharma belongings to his disciple. Yet the robe given has more associations with Wu Zetian than with Bodhidharma, and Faure claims that for Jingjue himself it was the *Laṅkā-sūtra* and not the robe that functioned as the sacralized symbol of his heritage.

Faure addresses the role of the *Laṅkā-sūtra* in his discussion of the dilemma presented by the chronology of Jingjue's scriptural interests. Jingjue's progression from a commentary (no longer extant) on the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*, to the *Lengqie shizi ji*, and finally to a commentary on the *Heart Sūtra* confounds what would later become a kind of Southern School Chan *panjiao* that placed the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures, especially the *Vajracchedikā*, over the gradualist "Northern School" *Laṅkā-sūtra*. Faure rejects a hypothetical argument that Jingjue's *Prajñāpāramitā* writings were a concession to lay followers, and proposes the following solution:

> The second argument, to which I give my tentative support, holds that Jingjue's thought was deeply coherent and ultimately based on the *Prajñāpāramitā* doctrine. The *Record* [i.e. the *Lengqie shizi ji*] did a great deal to bolster the identification of the Chan of the Northern School with the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. But, despite the reference to the *Laṅkāvatāra* in the title of the *Record*, this text is much less quoted by Jingjue than are the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts. Jingjue does not seem to have taken any great interest in its doctrinal content. We get the impression that, for him as for

[168] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 184b13-17.

some of his predecessors, this canonical text is most important for its quasi-magical power and the authority it confers on whoever possesses it. Its transmission is a measure of orthodoxy, a little like that, at the same period, of the Daoist talismanic texts.[170]

The impression that the *Laṅkā* had a talismanic function for Jingjue is appealing, but it rests entirely upon Jingjue's choice of title and first patriarch. These emblematic choices are not negligible, but within the *Lengqie shizi ji* as a whole the *Laṅkā* becomes but one skandha in the Dharmakāya, or perhaps dhyāna-kāya, transmission. Faure's more compelling arguments show that Jingjue was attempting to negotiate between and reconcile a number of conflicting transmissional trends. The complexity of *Laṅkā* affiliations emerging from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* biographies reflects the tension between the Dharma and dhyāna tendencies that Zhiyi also addressed and tried to balance. In between Zhiyi's massive system and the Southern school's talismanic phrase "a special transmission outside the scriptures," Jingjue weaves a transmission discourse that is less consistent but perhaps more compelling than either. Consider Shenxiu's representation of his transmission to Wu Zetian in this passage that Jingjue quotes from Xuanze's *Lengqie renfa zhi*:

The Great Sage Empress Zetian asked Dhyana Master Shenxiu: "Whose doctrinal tenet is the Dharma you transmit?" He answered, "I have been favored with the Qizhou East Mountain teachings." [She] asked, "Upon what scriptural patent do you rely?" [He] replied, "I rely upon the one-practice samādhi of the *Wenshu shuo banruo jing* 文殊説般若經 (The Scripture of Mañjuśrī Expounding on the *Prajñā[pāramitā]*)."[171] Zetian

[169] *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2061) 823c13. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* it is not clear whether the empress or her son Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 was responsible for the bestowal, since 707 was during Zhongzong's reign and the passage merely states that Huian received the robe when he came to court to be honored. The reference to the *mona* robe is preceded by an interchange between Huian and the empress and also by Huian's receipt of a purple *kāṣāya* from Zhongzong. See below, note 250.

said: "If one would speak of cultivation the Way, nothing surpasses the East Mountain teachings."[172]

Earlier in the *Lengqie shizi ji*, the one-practice samādhi of the *Wenshu shou banruo jing* is identified with Daoxin's teachings.[173] Thus the above passage achieves a synthesis of the East Mountain tradition, Hongren, Daoxin, one-practice samādhi, and the wordless or ineffable transmission associated with the *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition, all sheltering under the umbrella of the *Laṅkā*. Not named in any of the transmission passages in the *Lengqie shizi ji*, the *Laṅkā* of the title serves not only as a tradition-sanctioned appeal to a single Indian scriptural authority but also evokes the distant mythical context of the sūtra itself, a place in which all Dharmas may be included without conflict. It is also worth noting that the empress imprints the "East Mountain" seal upon this ideal harmony.

One-practice samādhi and dhyāna in general are prominent themes throughout the *Lengqie shizi ji*, which warns against reducing dhyāna to any teaching or practice in particular. Hongren is quoted as saying that what he verifies in his students is none other than the vision of the Dharmakāya: "It is also said: 'The void has neither center nor border, the Buddhas' bodies are also thus.' My sanctioning (*yinke* 印可) of your clear vision of the Buddha-nature is exactly this."[174] Another quotation from Hongren follows:

> He also said, "At the same time that you are in the monastery sitting in dhyāna, is your body also sitting in dhyāna beneath the trees of the mountain groves? Are earth, wood, tiles, and stones also able to sit in dhyāna? Are earth, wood, tiles, and stones also able to see forms and hear sounds, wear a robe and hold an alms-bowl? The *Laṅkā-sūtra* reference to the objective

[170] Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 5 p. 16). See also Faure: 1989: 27-28.

[171] *T.* 8 (232) & (233). Zhiyi referred to this scripture as the source of the one-practice samādhi, which he equates with the first of four types of samādhi, the "constantly sitting." *Mohe zhiguan*, *T.* 46 (1911) 11a25. For a fuller discussion of the connections between one-practice samādhi, Zhiyi, Daoxin, and the *Lengqie shizi ji*, see Faure 1986.

(*viṣaya*) Dharmakāya is precisely this."[175]

The tenor of this passage echoes the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, resonates with Huairang's demonstration to Mazu that sitting in meditation to make a Buddha is like polishing a tile to make a mirror, and is amplified in Dōgen's writings.[176] The vision of the uncontained and all-encompassing Dharmakāya is/not realized in a monk in a robe sitting in a monastery. However, as soon as the question of sanctioning this realization arises, mind, body (gender), robe, and institutional context suddenly appear as distinct and obdurate as earth, wood, tiles and stones.

In the process of Chan's nascence, the gap between dhyāna and Dharma poles somehow widened -- dhyāna became as all-in-all as a vision of the Dharmakāya and Dharma was reduced to the tradition of transmission through various "objective" channels, scriptural, sacerdotal, and institutional. In Jingjue's time the problem of validating and maintaining a "special transmission" was just beginning to become apparent. He was able to articulate the various tendencies that would go into the formation of a new doctrinal compound, which he unified under the label of the "Southern School" of *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* exegesis, and in doing so he made its internal contradictions more obvious. Faure argues that this was both prescient and self-defeating:

> Thus it can be seen that several major themes in the *Record* would give birth to doctrines held by violently opposing branches of Chan. Are

[172] *Lengqie shizi ji*, Yanagida 1971: 298, Faure, French trans., 1989: 172-173.

[173] *Ibid.*, Yanagida 1971: 186.

[174] *Ibid*, Yanagida 1971: 287, Faure, French trans., 1989: 170. The quotation is from the *Rulai zhuangyan zhihui guangming ru yiqie fojingjue jing* 如來莊嚴智惠光明入一切佛境界經 (*Sarvabuddha-viṣayāvatāra-jñānālokālaṃkāra-sūtra*), *T.* 12 (357) 248a. See note in Yanagida 1971: 294.

[175] *Lengqie shizi ji*, Yanagida 1971: 287-288, Faure, French trans., 1989: 170. See *Laṅkā-sūtra*,

we to think that Jingjue himself had no awareness of these latent contradictions, or was he already trying to reconcile them by an appropriate synthesis? The second guess seems closer to the truth. But Jingjue, in his desire to establish a school, underestimated the strength of the centrifugal forces at work in his doctrine and could achieve only a superficial compromise. This weakness mars the *Record* seriously, and explains in part its rapid passing into oblivion.

The following period saw rivals attacking each other and the various Buddhist currents lost their flexibility, becoming fossilized into sects. To tell the truth, Jingjue himself contributed to this evolution in no small measure when he gave consistency to a patriarchal lineage that, up to his time, had remained a vague sketch. Doubtless influenced by Fachong, whose *Laṅkāvatāra* tradition was indebted to the thought of the Sanlun school, he came to see himself as the legitimate heir to the Southern School. It was this claim, taken up soon by another of Shenhui's disciples, Puji, that would provoke the reaction of Shenhui and prompt the creation of a new Southern School founded on the new "tradition" of the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra*.[177]

When Jingjue's syncretic "Southern School" was superseded by Shenhui's polemical one, the tension between dhyāna and Dharma and between "special" and objective transmission was resolved in the manner of Du Fei, by obscuring it in a thick atmosphere of patriarchal mystique. Out of this atmosphere there arose in turn Southern and Northern, Chan and teachings, *mozhao* 默照 (silent illumination) and *kanhua* 看話 (examining words), "just sitting" and kōan. Chan, the "differential tradition" as Faure has characterized it, was founded on a fissure and has perched like a sibyl breathing the fumes, alternatively recognizing and demonizing the source of its unfathomable powers.

I will conclude this section with further discussion of the Southern-Northern split, but let us glance at several inscriptions indicating trends in the conception of patriarchal

*Lengqie'abaduoluobao jing*, *T.* 16 (670) 484a. (Hongren's reference is closest to a phrase in Guṇabhadra's four *juan* version, see note in Yanagida 1971: 295.)

transmission immediately prior to Shenhui. In the early decades of the eighth century there were a number of inscriptions written for monks who would later be designated "Northern School," i.e. Shenxiu and his heirs, in which the subject of the inscription was linked to a special lineal transmission from Bodhidharma and this lineage was praised in exalted terms.[178] The first I will consider is an epitaph for Shenxiu written by the eminent literati Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730).[179] In this epitaph the pedigree of the East Mountain transmission is listed in what would become the standard form: Bodhidharma, Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, Hongren, with only a single heir of the latter mentioned, in this case Shenxiu.

Here we find some familiar elements in a new configuration. There is a hint of mystery in the passage regarding Hongren's transmission to Shenxiu, which recalls the esotericism of the *Chuan fabao ji* and prefigures the transmission in the *Platform Sūtra*. Hongren praises Shenxiu and invites him to share his seat, and after being thus elevated to equality with his master Shenxiu departs in tears and is "sequestered in secrecy."[180] There is also reference to mind-transmission (*yichuan* 意傳), described as follows: "Powerfully maintaining virtue, for ten thousand kalpas [the Tathāgatas] have long handed down the Dharma-seal, in one moment they suddenly confer the Dharmakāya."[181] Significantly, Shenxiu's transmission is linked to the *Laṅkā*: "He upheld the *Laṅkā*,

[176] See the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, *T*. 12 (374) 581a, the passage on Mazu and Huairang in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *T*. 51 (2076) 240c18-23 (and see also 247a13-16), and Dōgen's 道元 (1200-1253) *Bendōwa* 辦道話 and *Sansui-kyō* 山水經 in the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 (Treasury of the True Dharma Eya), *T*. 82 (2582).

[177] Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 7 pp. 22-23).

[178] See for example epitaphs for Yifu 義福 (661-736), *QTW* 280, vol. 6: 3596-3598, and Jingxian 景賢 (660-723), *ibid*., 362, vol. 8: 4650. For a discussion of Shenxiu's descendents, see Faure 1988: 87-137 & 1989: 179-182, McRae 1986: 61-71.

[179] *Jingzhou Yuquansi Datong chanshi beiming bing xu* 荊州玉泉寺大通禪師碑銘并序 (Stele Inscription for Chan Master Datong [Shenxiu] of Yuquan Monastery in Jingzhou, with preface) *QTW* 231, vol. 5: 2953-2954. (There are also other versions extant, see Yanagida 1967: 497; Faure 1988: 41-42 n. 3.) For an annotated edition, see Yanagida 1967: 497-516.

transmitting it as the mind-essence. 'To go beyond this -- there is no longer anyone who knows.'"[182]

Two other noteworthy inscriptions were written for Shenxiu's disciple Puji 普寂 (651-739) and are directly related to Shenhui's denunciation. The first is an epitaph written by the imperial prince Li Yong 李邕 in 742.[183] In this oft-quoted passage, Puji is put on a par with the reigning emperor Xuanzong: "The great master of the four seas -- this is an appellation of our Sagely Literate and Divinely Martial Emperor [Hsuan-tsung] of the Kai-yuan [Period]. He who has entered into the wisdom of buddhahood and gloriously become the lord of the myriad dharmas -- this is an appellation of the seventh generation of our Ch'an School (*ch'an-men*), Preceptor Ta-chao."[184] Another epitaph makes the same point in an even more fulsome manner:

> Only Heaven is great, and Yao alone corresponded to it. Only the Buddha is saintly, and Chan [teachings] alone succeed to it. Therefore in the West the Indian [masters] handed down the trust, five suns illuminating the early days, and in the East the Chinese [masters] transmitted the lamp, seven patriarchs brightening imperial fortunes. Our seventh patriarch, State Preceptor of three courts, the Venerable Dazhao, has departed from the two extremes, transcended all *bhūmis*, attained the compassion of the Tathāgatas, and entered into the super-knowledge of the Buddhas.[185]

It is difficult now to gauge the general or the imperial reaction to such *lèse majesté*. There may have been reactions in Buddhist circles prior to Shenhui's -- interestingly,

[180] Yanagida 1967: 498. The phrase is a quotation from the *Yijing*, see *ibid.*, note on p. 505. This reference has been the source of some scholarly speculation as to the cause and duration of Shenxiu's obscurity, see Faure 1988: 29. It is possible that Shenxiu's personal mystery was transfigured into an element of the patriarchal mystique when the motif of the heir-in-hiding was elaborated in the *Platform Sūtra*.

[181] Yanagida 1967: 498.

[182] *Ibid.*, p. 499. The last phrase is also quoted from the *Yijing*, see *ibid.*, note on p. 507.

there is a record of two Tiantai nuns who repudiated Puji's spiritual authority in 712, and it is said that even Puji's disciple Yixing 一行 (683-727) supported them.[186] Certainly Puji was singled out as the object of Shenhui's most virulent diatribes and colorful accusations.[187] In the next section we will examine Shenhui's claims in more detail and ask how Shenhui's patriarchal ideology, no less hubristic than that of Puji's epitaphs, was able to supersede its originating "other." In the manner of René Girard on violence at the foundations of culture, Faure writes: "By assigning the role of scapegoat to the Northern School, which thus became the emblematic figure of heterodoxy, one could succeed in limiting in time and space those deviationist risks (intellectualizing, quietism, secularization, etc.) to which Chan is constantly exposed . . . . This exorcism has permitted the maintenance to our own time of the myth of an idealized, "pure" Chan, a doctrine uncontaminated by its relationship to history, a school from which any power connections would be, if not completely rejected, at least subordinated to the search for a transcendental Truth."[188]

As noted in the discussion on Jingjue, Faure argues that prior to Shenhui's scapegoating of Shenxiu and his heirs the emerging Chan identity was characterized by eclecticism rather than "purist" sectarianism. Both Faure and McRae have demonstrated that many of the teachings associated with the Southern school, including its leitmotiv "subitism," were anticipated in the far-ranging doctrines found in "Northern School"

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[183] *Dazhao chanshi daming* 大照禪師塔銘 (Stūpa Inscription for Chan Master Dazhao [Puji]) *QTW* 262, vol. 6: 3360-3363.

[184] *Ibid.*, McRae, trans., 1986: 65.

[185] *Diqizu Dazhao heshang jimie ri qizan wen* 第七祖照和尚寂滅日齋讚文, S. 2512. Edition in Tanaka 1983: 555. For a discussion of materials on Puji, see *ibid.*, pp. 549-555.

[186] See Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 3, p. 18).

[187] See for example the passage in the *Ding shifei lun* wherein Shenhui says that Puji falsely claims to represent the Southern School, and accuses him of having tried to destroy the real Southern school by sending one of his followers disguised as a monk to steal the head of Huineng's mummy. Fortunately, the numinous substance of the mummy broke three swords without sustaining any damage. Shenhui then

works.[189] Faure shows that the lives and works of Shenxiu and his disciples were enriched by Tiantai, Pure Land, Vinaya and Tantric influences.[190] However, he asserts, as the "will to orthodoxy" gained force these interdependent doctrinal currents separated into schools: "The establishment of patriarchal lineages within every school in the eighth century tended to conceal completely any lateral relations among the various patterns of thought. In theory only the vertical relationships remained, those between master and disciple. Although it had its reasons for existing, this primacy given to genealogy and the tree-shaped schemas it imposes do not permit us to see the 'rhizomes,' the tangled web of influences actually at work under the surface."[191]

Faure maintains that contrary to Chan sectarian mythology Shenxiu's heirs were not irrevocably stigmatized by Shenxiu's association with Wu Zetian and were not vanquished by Shenhui, but withdrew to various mountains and declined to become embroiled. Rather than to dishonor and defeat, Faure attributes the waning influence of Shenxiu's heirs at court to the change of generations and issues. Xuanzong was more attuned to Yixing's practical esoteric Buddhism than to the philosophical heritage of Yixing's master Puji. Moreover, the officials who supported Shenxiu and his heirs were supplanted by a younger set of successful examinees and by a resurgent aristocratic faction.[192] In spite of Southern School dominance of late eighth century Chan discourse, the Northern School continued to flourish, particularly at Nanyue, and lend its subtle influence to a number of the sectarian branches, including the Bao Tang.

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charges Puji with sending another follower to deface Huineng's stele and carve a new inscription stating that Shenxiu was the sixth patriarch and inherited the robe. Finally, he fulminates against Puji for setting up a Hall of Seven Patriarchs on Mt. Song and following the *Chuan fabao ji* in placing both Faru and Shenxiu in the sixth generation with no mention of Huineng. Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 288-289.

188 Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 8, p. 8).

189 McRae 1986: 235-253 & 1987: 227-278; Faure 1988: 167-178 & 1991: 11-78. Moreover, McRae shows that prior to 730 Shenhui was affiliated with and participated in the discourse of the religious community that he would later excoriate as the "Northern School." See McRae 1987: 237-246.

Shenhui's Message

Although Shenhui began his campaign against the "Northern School" in 730, the most famous scene of Shenhui's revelations about Hongren's heirs was the *wuzhe dahui* 無遮大會 (unrestricted great assembly) of 732 at the Dayun 大雲 monastery in Huatai 滑臺. The work entitled *Putidamou nanzong ding shifei lun* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論 (Treatise Determining the True and False about the Southern School of Bodhidharma) purports to contain Shenhui's message and answers to questions on this and previous occasions as recorded by his disciple Dugu Pei 獨弧沛.[193]

As is well-known, Shenhui asserted that Buddhist history had been misrepresented, and his contending version undercut the spiritual legitimacy of Shenxiu and his heirs. Shenhui fused historical and doctrinal claims into an exclusive notion of patriarchal succession in which only one patriarch in each generation received mind-to-mind transmission of the true Dharma from the previous patriarch, linking back to Śākyamuni's transmission to Mahākāśyapa.

According to Shenhui, when Bodhidharma passed this unique mind-to-mind transmission to Huike, he concomitantly transmitted his robe as verification. Shenhui claimed that the Dharma and robe had then been passed through Sengcan, Daoxin and Hongren to the sixth patriarch, Huineng 慧能 (638-713). In fashioning his version of the lineage and biographies of the ancestral patriarchs of the Chan school, Shenhui drew from the *Chuan fabao ji* and *Lengqie shizi ji*, but he claimed that Hongren had secretly

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[190] Faure 1988: 57-83, 139-149, 154-155.

[191] Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 2 p. 17).

[192] Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 3, pp. 1-12).

[193] Abbreviated to *Ding shifei lun*. *Ca.* 745. The Dunhuang manuscripts P. 2045 (part 1), P. 3047 (part 2), and P. 3488 (part 1) were collated and edited in Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 260-314. The Ishii Dunhuang ms. corresponding to P. 3047 was discovered later and published in Suzuki and Kōda, eds., 1934. Gernet, French trans., [1949] 1977; McRae, English trans., forthcoming. *Cf.* related later works: 1) *Dunwu wushang banruo song* 頓悟無生般若頌, *ca.* 750, S. 468, in Hu Shih [1930] 1970; also known as the *Xianzong ji* 顯宗記 (Record of the Manifestation of the Doctrine), in *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, *T.*51 (2076)

transmitted the Dharma and robe solely to Shenhui's own master, Huineng.

In 753 Shenhui was temporarily banished from the capital by order of Emperor Xuanzong. This has generally been attributed to vengeful motives on the part of "Northern School" followers, but the problem may have been the size of Shenhui's audiences rather than their views. In any case, his exile was hardly onerous. He was given a private audience with the emperor prior to his relocation, and he was then sent to four provincial monasteries over the course of several years. McRae writes of this period: "Far from being a 'banishment,' the impression given by the description of Shenhui's movements is that of an imperially sponsored regional lecture tour."[194] Of course, we must keep in mind that one of the main sources of this impression is Shenhui's fifth-generation heir Zongmi, who would have wanted to present the matter in the best possible light.

Shenhui was restored to imperial favor after the An Lushan rebellion of 755, when his success in attracting large audiences to the ordination platform was seen as an asset rather than a threat. While the implications of Shenhui's teachings may have called into question the boundary between lay and ordained, ordination was still officially recognized as a distinct privilege affording exemption from conscription and taxation. It was also an expensive privilege, and so after the rebellion sales of ordination certificates became a means by which the Tang could raise short-term revenue for the war-effort against the rebel forces. Shenhui's contributions were recognized by the Emperor Suzong (r. 756-762), though if we accept the Longmen stele inscription date of 758 for Shenhui's death, then his fund-raising career was rather brief.[195] This inscription of 765 refers to Shenhui as the seventh patriarch and Huineng's heir, but contending lineages

458c25-459b6; abbreviated variant *Xianzong lun* 顯宗論 in the *Zongjing lu*, *T.*48 (2016) 949a26-b7, Zeuschner, trans., 1976. 2) *Luojing Heze Shenhui dashi yu* 洛京荷澤神會大師語 (The Words of the Great Master Heze Shenhui of Luoyang) *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, *T.* 51 (2076) 439b20-440a2; Zeuschner, partial trans., 1974: 45-47.

[194] McRae 1987: 236.

were already in the making. Shenhui's legacy is a topic of ongoing discussion in Chan studies, but it seems clear that Shenhui's doctrinal and genealogical claims became influential only to be modified and superseded.[196]

Although the subject is by now well-worn, let us take a quick glance at some of the doctrinal underpinnings of Shenhui's ideology of the patriarchy before examining its alterations. As in many things, one must begin with the doctrine of no-self, the Buddha's teaching that there is no such entity as a separate, autonomous self and that what we perceive as self is a composite of the factors of the psycho-physical world. The problem, according to early Buddhist analyses of mind, is the reaction of aversion and attraction that arises with each momentary illusory self, for this leads to its own perpetuation and inevitable dissatisfaction. Basic Buddhist practice thus consists in overcoming false distinctions such as self and other that lead to aversion and attraction. However, as discussed in the context of the criteria of authoritative transmission, the early Buddhist Saṅgha did not advocate lack of distinction between lay and ordained. This foundational distinction did not change, although the teaching of no-self evolved into the doctrine of emptiness, the teaching of the "dependent origination" of all illusorily self-identical or independent entities. This was elaborated further in such doctrines as the identity between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the doctrine of non-dual consciousness as the basis for the apparent duality of self and external world, the doctrine of the simultaneous interdependent-arising of all non-dual reality in each consciousness and each in all, and the doctrine of fundamental wisdom-matrix (tathāgatagarbha) as the true nature of all beings.

It was largely the latter doctrine which influenced Shenhui when he denounced "Northern School" Chan as dualistic striving to remove adventitious defilements. He

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[195] On Suzong and Shenhui, see Weinstein 1987: 65. On the Longmen stele, see Takeuchi 1985: 313-325, which includes an annotated edition and Japanese translation.

claimed that this "purity Chan" was counterproductive insofar as it focussed attention on the distinction between wisdom and ignorance, since this distinction was itself the only ignorance. His charge that Shenxiu and his heirs advocated such a notion of practice has been effectively challenged.[197]

As is true of most reform movements, polemics were integral to Shenhui's soteriology. The teaching of sudden awakening was itself nothing new, but Shenhui set it in a context of imminent crisis, a crux in which both the historical fate of the Dharma and the personal awakening of the listener were implicated. Repeatedly vanquished but still struggling, an opponent like the hapless master Chongyuan of the *Ding shifei lun* lay beneath the platform upon which Shenhui urged his audiences to realize bodhicitta/Buddha-nature im-mediately. McRae characterizes the effect of Shenhui's polemics as follows:

> In combination with his doctrine of subitism, the very heat of Shen-hui's criticism of gradualism had a rhetorical impact of the highest significance: by publicly criticizing one faction's meditation teachings he made all the members of the growing Ch'an school more aware of the external expression -- the packaging, if you will -- of their ideas and modes of practice. After Shen-hui, Ch'an masters learned to protect themselves from criticism by avoiding dualist formulations. . . . This imposition of the avoidance of dualistic formulations, which I call the rule of rhetorical purity, was one of Shen-hui's most important areas of impact on Chinese Ch'an.[198]

Developing a related thesis, Faure argues that the salient feature of the sudden teaching is that it obviates the need for and even the orthodoxy of hierarchic levels of mediation, of "conventional truth." He shows that Chan subitist doctrine was a further

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[196] See Hu Shih 1932 &1953; Suzuki 1949 &1953; Yanagida 1967 &1985; Gernet [1949] 1977; Yampolsky 1967; Faure 1988; Seidel, forthcoming, "Den'e"; and McRae 1987 & forthcoming.

[197] See McRae 1986 & 1987; Faure 1988.

extension of the denial of hierarchy and multiplicity already intrinsic to Buddhist discourse:

> One may reinterpret from this point of view the Chan discourse on nonduality, "returning to the principle," as a makeshift response to the actual situation provoked by the epistemological cut initiated by the doctrine of the Buddha and leading to the theory of the twofold truth. In theory, the two truths are affirmed only to be negated by the Middle Way, which consists in seizing them simultaneously while acknowledging their hierarchy. In practice, however, and more precisely in Chan practice, conventional truth tends to be negated for the sake of ultimate truth. [199]

Bao Tang Wuzhu's teachings are prime examples of the *via negativa* passing as ultimate truth. And although he could refuse the offer of a palanquin ride to meet his patron, he could not so easily dispense with a conveyance for his antinomianism and antiritualism, namely language. This is borne out in the *Lidai fabao ji* account of Shenhui's teachings. The following passage captures the sense of immediacy in his preaching, but it also opens up immanent and ambiguous space for the mediating act of expressing the sudden:

> At Heze Monastery in the eastern capital, every month the Venerable Shenhui would set up a platform area expound on the Dharma for the people, breaking down "purity" Chan and upholding "tathāgata" Chan. He upheld realizing for oneself and he upheld verbal explanation -- regarding śila, samādhi, and prajñā he did not eschew verbal explanation, but said, "Just as [one] speaks, this is none other than śila, just as [one] speaks, this is none other than samādhi, just as [one] speaks, this is none other than prajñā."[200]

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[198] McRae 1987: 256.

[199] Faure 1991: 77. For the full discussion of these issues, see *ibid*., pp. 53-78.

The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s incorporated much of Shenhui's ideology and soteriology, but as noted in the beginning of this chapter, they did not include him in their lineage. Opening with the passage above, the *Lidai fabao ji* section on Shenhui is designed to displace rather than lionize him. Shenhui is made to say, "There is one who comes after me who will teach, I cannot presume to teach."[201] This is followed by an account of the debate between Shenhui and Chongyuan that forms the substance of the *Ding shifei lun*, but in the *Lidai fabao ji* Shenhui comes across very differently. The *Lidai fabao ji* version focuses on the argument over Cunda, the lay follower who served the Buddha his last meal. Let us look at comparable passages in the two works.

The *Lidai fabao ji* follows the *Ding shifei lun* in introducing Cunda via a quote from the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*: "Homage to Cunda, homage to Cunda, his body was that of an ordinary mortal, his mind was the same as the Buddha's mind."[202] After this, the two versions diverge. The *Ding shifei lun* passage is as follows:

> Dharma Master Chongyuan asked, "Have you seen the Buddha-nature? His Reverence [i.e. Shenhui] answered, "I have seen it." Dharma Master Chongyuan asked, "Did you see it in a comparative sense {*biliang* 比量}, or did you see it in an actual sense {*xianliang* 現量}?" His Reverence answered, "I saw it in a comparative sense." [The Dharma Master] also rebuked, "What is comparison {*bi* 比}, and what is estimation {*liang* 量}? His Reverence answered, "That which is called 'comparison' is comparison to Cunda. That which is called 'estimation' is equivalence to Cunda." Dharma Master Chongyuan said, "Did you definitely see it?" His Reverence answered, "I definitely saw it." Dharma Master Chongyuan asked, "In what fashion did you see it?" His Reverence answered, "In no fashion."

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200 *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185b14-18.

201 *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185b19-20.

202 *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185b23-24. *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, *T.* 12 (374) 372b26-27. For the same quote in the

> Dharma Master Chongyuan was silent and did not speak. His Reverence saw that the other was silent, did not understand what he had said, and was not going to ask anything more.[203]

This is the version in the *Lidai fabao ji*:

> Dharma Master Yuan went on to ask, "Has the Venerable perceived [the Buddha-Nature] or not?" Hui replied, "I have." [Yuan] further asked, "In what way do you perceive, is it by eyes, ears or nose that you perceive?" Hui replied, "Perceiving is not so quantifiable, perceiving is simply perceiving." [Yuan] further asked, "Do you perceive the same as Cunda, or not?" Hui replied, "Regarding perception by comparison and inference {*biliang jian* 比量見} -- 'compared to Cunda' and 'by inference identical to Cunda' -- I dare not make a final conclusion." He was further questioned by Dharma Master Yuan, "Chan Master, has the founder's robe been transmitted or not?" Hui replied, "It has. When it is not transmitted, the Dharma will be broken off." [Yuan] further asked, "Has the Chan Master got it or not?" [Hui] replied, "It is not at my place." The Dharma Master further asked, "Who has got this robe?" [Hui replied,] "There is one who has got it. In due course it should be apparent. When this person expounds on the Dharma, the true Dharma will flow forth and false Dharmas will perish of themselves. In order to further the work of the Buddha-Dharma, [for the time being] he will be hidden and will not yet come out."[204]

While in the *Ding shifei lun* Shenhui is shown repeatedly baffling Chongyuan with his profundity and quick responses, in the *Lidai fabao ji* Shenhui submits to an interrogation and ends by giving a prophetic endorsement of Wuzhu. The motives for

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*Ding shifei lun*, see Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 276.

[203] Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 277; McRae, trans., forthcoming (Definition of the Truth: 17). I have added characters in {} brackets in both McRae's translation and my translation of the comparable (but by no means directly equivalent) passage in the *Lidai fabao ji*. I have added these bracketed characters in order to clarify the slight divergence in choice of translation for the character *liang*. My translation follows the definitions given in Nakamura's *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, p. 1120.

[204] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185b28-c8. In adjacent passages, Shenhui is made to repeat twice more

such different portrayals need not be belabored, but the question remains -- why Cunda?[205]

Both "Northern" and "Southern" Chan monks were very fond of evoking the lay paragon Vimalakīrti, the ultimate exception who did not disprove monastic rule. Instead, Shenhui claimed fraternity with the layperson who gave the Buddha his last and fatal meal. He drew this example of Buddha-nature from the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, in which Cunda's role is praised and he is said to be a Buddha without characteristics. The figure of the lay devotee who kills the Buddha with his offering is oddly evocative of the Saṅgha perpetually in danger of being killed by kindness, done in by its great wealth and accessibility. The figure of Cunda embodies the interplay of erasure and doubling -- the one responsible for the Buddha's death becomes the Buddha. And in the context of Chan inversion of symbols, the one without the characteristics of a Buddha is the true Buddha. These inter-versions prefigure Wuzhu's identity with his teacher Wuxiang ("Without Characteristics") and also Linji's 臨濟 famous injunction, "If you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha."

Indulging in some counter-colloquialism, one might also say "erase the Buddha and the Buddha is in-your-face." The mind-to-mind transmission of the patriarchs turns on precisely the same empty interchange between one and another, the source of the identity and the violent conflict between master and disciple that is played out endlessly in encounter dialogue literature such as the *Linji lu* 臨濟錄 (The Record of Linji). Shenhui's parables and polemics cannot be reduced to elegant Huayan-style abstractions about identity and difference or to stark political opportunism, but neither can they be differentiated from these extremes. Consider this exchange from the "Miscellaneous Dialogues" in which Shenhui answers questions put to him by various interlocutors:

[205] I do not know quite what to make of the figure of the "Great Master Cunda" (純陁大師) who appears in the chronological pictoral representation of the transmission of the robe in the Dali scroll. In the scroll, he appears as the third patriarch after Shenhui. See Li Lin-ts'an 1982: 95, panel 52 & 53.

Dharma Master Chien of Mount Lu asked, "What is the meaning of the Middle Path?" Answer: "It is the extremes." Question: "I just asked you about the meaning of the Middle Path. Why do you answer that it is the extremes?" Answer: "The Middle Path you just mentioned is necessarily dependent on the meaning of the extremes. Without depending on the meaning of the extremes one cannot posit the Middle Path."[206]

Shenhui empties the path by turning out extremes. In the passage above he is making a point about the dependent origination of the concepts of path and progress, but this could apply as well to the "no place" in between the two extremes he taught -- immediate Buddha-nature of and for everyone, and strictly serial identical patriarchal transmission. The message of the single line of true transmission was preached in the context of mass ordination and the drama of the patriarchal robe was enacted upon the ordination platform. The audience -- lay, ordained, and newly ordained -- were all without distinction excluded from this transmission, and yet they crowded the ordination assemblies of Chan masters.

Depictions of mass ordination from wall murals at Dunhuang and Yulin create harmonious composition out of hierarchical interrelated clusters -- the central image of Śākyamuni flanked by bodhisattvas and arhats, the groups of women and men awaiting tonsure, the woman at the Buddha's right hand and the man at his left undergoing tonsure while a monk holds up a robe waiting to enfold them, and the rows of folded robes and monastic vessels.[207] We may imagine this detailed and crowded visionary setting as the

[206] Suzuki 1968, vol 3: 248, McRae, trans., forthcoming (4B1: 24). (See also the discussion of the Middle Way in the *Tanyu*, Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 247-248.) There are two versions of the "Miscellaneous Dialogues: 1) *Heze heshang wenda za zhengyi* 荷澤和上問答雜徵義 (Miscellaneous Dialogues of the Venerable of Heze) in two surviving manuscripts, P. 3047 (part 1), in Suzuki and Kōda, eds., 1934; and the Ishii ms. Synoptic edition in Suzuki 1968, vol. 3. 2) *Nanyang heshang wenda za zhengyi* 南陽和尚問答雜徵義 (Miscellaneous Dialogues of the Venerable of Nanyang) S. 6557. Gernet, French trans., [1949] 1977; McRae, English trans., forthcoming.

[207] Dunhuang Mogao Cave 445, north wall, and Yulin Cave 25. For Mogao Cave 445, see *Dunhuang*

context at work within Shenhui's Middle Path, where the exclusive/inclusive contradiction inherent in the bodhisattva precepts gives way to the extremes of patriarchal transmission and formless precepts.

Robes in the *Platform Sūtra* and the *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*

Repairing once more to the notion of "tangled hierarchy," one might say that the ordination platform is the foundation of Chan patriarchal transmission as much as the transmission supports the identity of a distinctly Chan ordination platform. In the most influential of the Chan texts of the eighth century, the *Platform Sūtra*, Huineng tells the story of his own induction into patriarchy as part of his sermon from an ordination platform. The episode in which Hongren transmits his Dharma and robe to Huineng is the centerpiece of the Chan patriarchal tradition. The *Lidai fabao ji* account quotes Shenhui much more directly than does the *Platform Sūtra*, but the latter became the standard version of "Southern School" Chan transmission. In 1004, a late version of the *Platform Sūtra* story was incorporated in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, thus becoming the first Chan history to receive imperial sanction. The earliest extant versions of the *Platform Sūtra* itself, however, are Dunhuang manuscripts which date from roughly the same time as the *Lidai fabao ji*.

I would like to quote corresponding passages from the *Platform Sūtra* and the *Lidai fabao ji*, passages which illustrate the relative similarity of their accounts of Huineng's inheritance of the robe and their complete divergence regarding transmission after Huineng. The first person narrator of the *Platform Sūtra* is Huineng:

> At midnight the Fifth Patriarch called me into the hall and expounded the Diamond Sūtra to me. Hearing it but once, I was immediately awakened, and that night I received the Dharma. None of the others knew anything

*Mogao ku* 敦煌莫高窟 (The Mogao Caves at Dunhuang), 1987 reprint, vol. 3, plate 175. There are no

about it. Then he transmitted to me the Dharma of Sudden Enlightenment and the robe, saying: "I make you the Sixth Patriarch. The robe is the proof and is to be handed down from generation to generation. My Dharma must be transmitted from mind to mind. You must make people awaken to themselves. . . . If you stay here there are people who will harm you. You must leave at once."[208]

The corresponding passage from the *Lidai fabao ji* is as follows:

> In the night [Huineng] was secretly summoned to [the Master's] room, and when they had spoken together for three days and three nights, [Hongren] entrusted [Huineng] with the Dharma and robe, [saying] "You are to be the Great Master of this world, and thus I command you to depart quickly."[209]

In the *Platform Sūtra*, when Huineng is on the point of death and has been asked who will inherit the robe and the Dharma, he says:

> The robe may not be handed down. In case you do not trust in me, I shall recite the verses of the preceding five patriarchs, composed when they transmitted the robe and the Dharma. If you depend on the meaning of the verse of the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, then there is no need to hand down the robe.[210]

In the *Lidai fabao ji* version Huineng says:

> "Do not ask. After this, hardships will arise in great profusion. How often have I faced death on account of this robe? At Master Xin's place it

published photos of the Yulin cave, which I saw on a trip in 1994.

[208] For all *Platform Sūtra* passages, I use Philip Yampolsky's translation of Stein 5475. Yampolsky, trans., 1967: 133.

[209] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 182b13-16.

[210] Yampolsky, trans., 1967: 176.

was stolen three times, at Master Ren's place it was stolen three times, and now at my place it has been stolen six times. But at last no one will steal this robe of mine, for a woman has taken it away. So don't ask me any more."[211]

The woman is the Empress Wu, who is to give the robe to Zhishen 智詵 (609-702), the great-grandfather in the Dharma of the Bao Tang founder Wuzhu.[212] The genealogical implications are complicated by the fact that although Zhishen is actually a disciple of the fifth patriarch Hongren, he receives the sixth patriarch Huineng's robe of transmission from the empress and passes it on to his disciple Chuji 處寂 (669-736), who passes it to Wuxiang. Except for this interesting claim, the *Lidai fabao ji* passages having to do with the robe and its version of the patriarchal succession in China are largely identical to Shenhui's.

Let us briefly review the opinions of the foremost Chan authority Yanagida Seizan regarding the relationship between Shenhui and the *Platform Sūtra*. Yanagida has offered different theories over the years, arguing first (in 1967) that although the *Platform Sūtra* has obvious affinities with Shenhui's writings, it is actually the product of a member or members of the Oxhead School lineage who reworked Shenhui's symbolic and rhetorical framework and used it to promote a variant (and more sophisticated) doctrine and lineage.[213] Yanagida surmised next (in 1985) that it was written by a third generation legitimate successor to Huineng as a direct challenge to Shenhui's claim to Huineng's doctrine and lineage.[214] Recently Yanagida has stated that whatever the origins of the *Platform Sūtra*, there are no traces of Huineng's doctrine and lineage that can be

[211] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 182c4-8.

[212] 智詵 is variously romanized Zhixian, Zhixin, and Zhishen. A note in the 1919 edition of the *Jingde chuandeng lu* recommends Zhishen. Chubun shuppansha reprint 1984: 79.

[213] Yanagida 1967: 181-212, see summary in McRae 1993: 68-71.

[214] Yanagida 1985: 404-417, see summary in McRae 1993: 94-96.

separated from Shenhui's writings, and he has turned his attention to elucidating the close ties between Shenhui's thought and the apocryphal *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*.[215]

There are several instances in Shenhui's writings in which passages and lines are taken from the *Vajrasamādhi* and yet not identified as quotations. In one of the most intriguing of these, a section of the *Ding shifei lun* is composed of a pastiche of passages from the second and third fascicles of the *Vajrasamādhi*, but the section is identified instead as a quotation from a *Prajñāpāramitā* text, the *Sheng Tian Wang banruo [poluomi] jing* 勝天王般若[波羅蜜]經.[216] The passages from the *Vajrasamādhi* are grafted onto an abbreviated section from the second fascicle of the *Sheng Tian Wang banruo jing*.[217] Furthermore, the *Vajrasamādhi* text has been changed slightly in places, apparently to render it more compatible with Shenhui's doctrine of sudden practice.[218] One wonders if perhaps the misleading attribution of the quotation in Shenhui's text points to the fact that the *Vajrasamādhi*, even though by then included in an official catalogue of scriptures, was still regarded as somewhat dubious.

Robert Buswell has convincingly argued that the *Vajrasamādhi* was composed in Silla in the latter decades of the seventh century, during which time there were close cultural ties between the Korean peninsula and mainland China. The text weaves

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[215] *Jin'gang sanmei jing* 金剛三昧經, *T.* 9 (273). See Yanagida, forthcoming (pp. 224-286). The following discussion is also indebted to Professor Yanagida's lectures at the International Institute for Zen Buddhism in Kyoto, 1993. On the origins of the *Vajrasamādhi* and its relation to early Chan, see Buswell 1989; see also Liebenthal 1956.

[216] Compare the *Vajrasamādhi* passages, *T.* 9 (273) 366c21-23; 367a4-6; 367c20-24; 368a18-21 to the *Ding shifei lun*, Suzuki and Kōda, eds., 1934: 52.

[217] Compare the *Sheng Tian Wang banruo [poluomi] jing*, *T.* 8 (231) 693c24-694a14 to Suzuki and Kōda, eds., 1934: 51-52.

[218] For example, consider the *Vajrasamādhi* line, *T.* 9 (273) 366c23: *De wufa jing, shi wei dasheng* 得五法淨，是謂大乘. "Attaining purification of the five dharmas, this is called the Mahāyāna." In the *Ding shifei lun*, "five dharmas" is changed to "the Dharma-Eye" *fayan* 法眼. Suzuki and Kōda, eds., 1934: 52.9. The difference is not great, but while purification of the five dharmas (another term for the five aggregates, the physical and mental elements comprising the phenomenal world) connotes gradual practice, purification of the Dharma-Eye (inherent wisdom) connotes the integral, undifferentiated qualities associated with sudden practice.

together tathāgatagarbha thought and teachings associated with the East Mountain school, all rendered so convincingly in authentic sūtra style that it was considered a translation of a lost Sanskrit original until this century.[219] I would like to quote a passage concerning "the robe of the tathāgatas," or "thus-come-ones," the realized Buddha or buddhas:

> Although he does not go forth into homelessness (*pravrajita*) he is no longer part of the household. For this reason, while he does not wear the dharma-robes and neither observes all the Prātimokṣa precepts [monk's disciplinary rules] nor participates in the Poṣada [fortnightly religious observance], he does not engage in personal licentiousness in his own mind and obtains the fruition of sainthood.... Taeryŏk Bodhisattva remarked, "This is inconceivable! Even though such a person has not gone forth into homelessness, he cannot but have gone forth. Why is this? He has entered the domicile of nirvāṇa, where he dons the robe of the tathāgatas and sits on the bodhi-seat (*bodhimaṇḍa*). Such a person should be worshipped respectfully even by śramaṇas."[220]

The figure who wears the "robe of the tathāgatas" is not "an exception who proves the rule" such as the super-layman Vimalakīrti, yet neither is he an exemplary monk who observes the precepts. The robe of this figure of ambiguous status is likewise inconceivable -- what, after all, does a Buddha-body wear? I suggest that the special status given Bodhidharma's robe in Shenhui's writing is akin to that of the *Vajrasamādhi*'s "robe of the tathāgatas," and the kind of figure Shenhui promoted in the sixth patriarch Huineng embodies some of the same ambiguous qualities of the "one who has not gone forth and cannot but have gone forth" -- to whom monks in ordinary Dharma-robes should pay homage.

In both Shenhui's writings and the *Lidai fabao ji*, Huineng does not become ordained

[219] Buswell 1989: 171-181.

[220] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

until after he has received transmission from Hongren, and then only when begged to do so by an eminent monk who wishes to become his disciple. This de-coupling of the link between ordination and status as a realized person is exaggerated even further in the *Lidai fabao ji*. The protagonist Wuzhu disdains activities associated with the ordinary śramaṇa, and as noted above the ninth century Chan scholar Zongmi faulted the Bao Tang school precisely for ordaining people without having them follow any particular practices. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s and Zongmi were perhaps the most explicit of the disputants over the antinomian implications of Shenhui's writings, but they articulated a tension that was far more comprehensive.

I suggest that the appeal of the "one who has not gone forth and cannot but have gone forth" reflects a certain disenchantment with the mantle of the ordinary monk, a disenchantment that followed upon the reversion to the Tang after the reign of Empress Wu, was given direction by the Emperor Xuanzong, and was accelerated by the An Lushan rebellion. Although the apocryphal *Vajrasamādhi* was probably composed before or during Wu Zetian's reign, it was still listed as "non-extant" in the Buddhist canon produced under her auspices in 695, and yet it was apparently widely known and officially accepted in China by the time of its inclusion in the Kaiyuan canon of 730.[221] In order to understand the devaluation of the status of the ordinary monk that seems to have taken place during that interval, I believe we must consider it as part of a critical response to a wholly different attempt to create a Buddhist elite. In other words, it is the role of the Empress Wu Zetian which we must now consider.

## Robes Purple and Gold

As introduced at the outset of this study, the *Lidai fabao ji*'s most frequently disputed

[221] This "reappearance" is due to the common seventh and eighth century practice of choosing the title for a work composed in China from among works listed in the catalogues as no longer extant. See *ibid.*, pp. 33-40.

claim involves the fate of Bodhidharma's robe, the "coat of many colors" of Chan patriarchal succession. Whether this robe also bears witness to fraternal betrayal remains to be seen.

The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s claimed that in 692, Bodhidharma's robe was sent by its legitimate trustee, the sixth Chan patriarch Huineng, to the court of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 684-705). The empress was said to have later bestowed it on Zhishen 智詵 (609-702), who was thus claimed to be the seventh patriarch in the lineage of the Bao Tang school. Just as the Bao Tang followers took Shenhui's doctrine to its logical extreme by advocating radically antinomian "formless" practice, so too they tried, by the device of Empress Wu's mediation, to extend the life of Shenhui's robe beyond the sixth generation.[222] Let us examine, then, the passage in the *Lidai fabao ji* that puts forth this claim.

The monk Zhishen has been invited to Empress Wu's court, where he encounters the challenge of an Indian Trepiṭaka (Tripiṭaka Master) with magical powers. The Trepiṭaka reads Zhishen's mind and, detecting that the Chan master is pining for home, taunts him about his attachment. The Trepiṭaka boasts that he can identify anything that Zhishen can bring to mind and Zhishen amiably agrees. He then defeats the Indian master in an exchange reminiscent of the classic meeting between the shaman and Huzi that is related in the *Zhuangzi*.[223] His success brings him to the attention of the empress, with whom he engages in a kind of encounter dialogue. The following passage begins in the middle of the mind-reading contest:

> [Zhishen] imagined himself dressed in layman's garb looking toward the section office of the western market. That Trepiṭaka said, "How can

[222] For a discussion of Bao Tang antinomianism as a natural extension of Shenhui's doctrines, see Faure 1991: 64.

[223] See *Chuang Tzu*, Watson, trans., 1964: 92-94.

[you], a worthy (*bhadanta*) monk, wear layman's clothing and gaze into the midst of the market?" Shen (i.e. Zhishen) said, "Very good, try it again." [Another similar scenario follows.] Shen said, "This time will be really good, try once more." Then, right where he was, by relying on the Dharma he produced no thoughts at all. That Trepiṭaka searched throughout the Three Worlds, but in vain. The Trepiṭaka brahmin was filled with reverence and respect, and he bowed his head down at Shen's feet, telling the Venerable, "I did not know that in the country of Tang there was Mahāyāna Buddha-Dharma. . . ."

[Empress Wu] Zetian saw that the Trepiṭaka had taken refuge in Chan Master Shen. Zetian submitted a question to all the *bhadanta*: "Do the Venerables have any desires?" Shenxiu 神秀, Xuanyue 玄約, Laoan 老安 and Xuanze 玄賾 all said, "We have no desires." Zetian asked Chan Master Shen, "Does the Venerable have any desires?" Chan Master Shen, fearing that he would not be allowed to return home, complied with the will of Zetian and replied, "I have desires." Zetian further asked, "How can you have desires?" Shen replied, "That which is born has desire. That which is not born has no desire." At these words, Zetian was awakened.[224]

When Zhishen insists on leaving, the empress gives him Bodhidharma's/Huineng's robe and other gifts, including an embroidered image of Maitreya. It is significant that bestowal of the robe takes place in the context of a Dharma transmission, just as in prior robe-transmission episodes. Here, however, the transmission is characterized by several kinds of inversion. First, the transmission of the sudden teaching, the identity of Buddha-nature and ordinary function that is beyond words, finds its voice as the antinomian affirmation of desire. Secondly, it is the bestower who is awakened by the recipient. Thirdly, a worldly ruler stands in for the Dharma-ruler, Huineng, who is still alive at the time and is subsequently informed by the empress of the fate of his robe. Finally, the bestower is a woman and an empress, a *lusus naturae* -- who, perhaps not incidentally,

[224] *T.* 51 (2075) 184a25-b9.

was known for her sexual appetites and also for having had her lover ordained the better to bestow upon him legitimacy and favors.

The empress was also the patroness of such widely-revered and impeccable monks as the Huayan founder Fazang 法藏 (643-712) and the "Northern School" Chan masters Shenxiu and Laoan, named in the *Lidai fabao ji* passage as two of the monks invited to court.[225] As noted in the previous section, references to the empress bestowing robes on Hongren's heirs are scattered throughout the hagiographical literature. Interestingly, there is an account in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography of Wuxiang 無相 (684-762) in which the empress bestows a robe not on Zhishen but on his disciple Chuji, who passes it on to Wuxiang, and there is no mention of Wuzhu. The robe is not claimed to be Huineng's, but there are echoes of the *Lidai fabao ji* in the theme of the welcoming of the future Dharma-heir and in the reference to Wuxiang's *dhūta* practice:

> At that time, there was a certain Chuji who was an extraordinary man. Wu Zetian once summoned him to the palace and conferred on him a nine-piece *māṇavaka* robe. Chuji could predict events and was never wrong. Before Wuxiang had arrived, Chuji said, "There is a guest coming from abroad. He will appear tomorrow. You should sweep up and prepare to attend to him. The next day, sure enough, Wuxiang arrived. It was at that time that Chuji gave him the name Wuxiang. In the middle of the night, Chuji gave Wuxiang the *māṇavaka* robe. With this robe, Wuxiang entered deep into a ravine and sat in meditation beneath a cliff. There were two black bulls that locked horns relentlessly right in front of where he was sitting. One came very close to where Wuxiang was and put its

[225] In later Chan lore Laoan, under his other name Da'an (大安), appears in roles that mirror Zhishen's within stories of a type one might call "the adventures of Hongren's disciples at Wu Zetian's court." In the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記 (Sequential Record of the Buddhas and Patriarchs) there is a story of a contest between Huian and a mind-reading prophetess in which the latter is finally baffled by encountering no-thought. See *T.* 49 (2035) 370a26-b5. In the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 (Anthology from the Patriarchal Hall) there is an episode in which Huian and Shenxiu are offered a bath by Wu Zetain, who intends to gauge their naked reaction to the female bathing attendents. She is duly impressed by Huian's manifest (or non-manifest) attitude of "no-desire." See *Zutang ji* 18, Yanagida, ed., 1974: 348a.

> hairy hoof up his sleeve. The hoof was cold as ice. The bull pushed his hoof in so that it rubbed against the monk's stomach, but Wuxiang did not move in the slightest.[226]

In contrast to the *Lidai fabao ji* and *Song gaoseng zhuan* stories, let us look another account of the empress conferring robes on monks at court. In 690, Empress Wu set a precedent by bestowing purple *kāṣāya* robes upon a group of monks, including her lover Huaiyi 懷義, as a mark of special favor. The earliest source for the event is the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Old Tang History):

> Huaiyi, Faming and others made the *Dayun jing*, in which was displayed a series of signs [concerning the Heavenly] Mandate and in which it was said that Zetian was Maitreya who had descended to be born and act as head of the Jambudvīpa. . . . Huaiyi, Faming and others, nine people, were all enfeoffed dukes of a subprefecture and were given different objects: all were given the purple *kāṣāya* and a "silver bag for the tortoise."[227]

This investiture enfolds Chinese patents of nobility within and around a gesture born of Indian Buddhist mythology. The princely robe, imperial talisman, and fief were indigenously Chinese symbols and substance of enfranchisement, granting permission to enter into the ritual arena constituted by the interplay of ancestral merit, heavenly sanction, and material privilege. The conferral of a robe signified imperial favor but was not one of the talismans of imperial legitimacy. However, in Maitreya mythology transfer of the *kāṣāya* robe evokes the inhumanly vast cycles of succession from Buddha to Buddha. Meritorious gifts from the ruler to the community of monks also recalls the Cakravartin "wheel-turning king" mythology of ideal confluence between world monarch

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[226] *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2061) 832b15-21, Kieschnick, trans., forthcoming.

[227] *Jiu Tang shu* 183, Zhonghua shuju ed., 1975: 4742; Forte, trans., 1976: 4-5.

and world salvation, an ideology we saw promoted in the *Renwang jing*.

Wu Zetian's gesture thus reflects the intricate interplay of signs characteristic of her reign. Her efforts on the one hand were directed toward fashioning a dynastic identity in the time-honored manner, through the relationship of names (such as the Zhou 周) and symbols (such as the tortoise) intended to evoke harmonious reverberations in the sanctioned terms of Han-derived cosmology.

On the other hand, she and her trusted advisors among the Buddhist clergy strove to build a new kind of empire, not through expansion of borders but rather by investing the entire realm in a rich (and expensive) overlay of institutional Buddhism. Other Chinese rulers before her, notably Emperor Wu of the Liang and Emperor Wen of the Sui, had been taken with variations on the theme of the ruler as bodhisattva ruling for the benefit of sentient beings. Wu Zetian's state ideology was replete with complex Cakravartin and bodhisattva symbolism, but as evidenced in the passage from the *Jiu Tang shu* quoted above she is remembered in official history as the one who dared to take upon herself the mantle of Maitreya, the future Buddha.

The eminent sinologist Antonino Forte presents a more nuanced picture, wherein the subtle manipulation of Maitreya symbolism stems from Wu Zetian's cadre of monk advisors, who can be credited at least provisionally for their sincere belief in the advent of an utopian Buddhist realm inaugurated by their empress. The commentary to the *Dayun jing* 大雲經 (*Mahāmegha-sūtra*) that they produced does claim that Wu Zetian is Maitreya -- softened by a note that *maitreya* merely means one who is compassionate or benevolent.[228] Forte puts forth the interesting argument that the monks responsible for this commentary were playing on the popular appeal of Maitreya but were also wary of the subversive aspects of millenarian Maitreyism. In other words, they were attempting

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[228] See Forte 1976: 156. The commentary is the *Dayun jing Shenhuang shouji yishu* 大雲經神皇授記義疏 (Commentary on the Meaning of the Prophecy about [Her Majesty] Shenhuang in the Great Cloud Scripture), S. 6502, Forte, trans., 1976: 183-238.

to win popular support and yet avoid becoming overly involved with the kind of messianic Maitreyism advocated in the banned apocrypha of the Sui, which might raise expectations too high and trigger a full-scale uprising.[229] In concrete political terms, they were trying to shift the balance of power from the aristocracy to the military and civil bureaucracy.[230] This is seen, for example, in the commentator's quotation from the so-called *Guangwu ming* 廣武銘 (Inscription Magnifying [Empress] Wu): "'All the people will be happy: it will be learned that civilians and soldiers will develop.' [Commentary:] Here it is made clear that the 'hundred offices' of the civil and military administration will be extended from now on."[231] These efforts of the empress's advisors can be said to have had mixed results, for in spite of the dynastic reversion back to the Tang neither the uprising nor the shift in balance were avoided.

Wu Zetian's legacy is a complex subject, but it is the lasting association between the empress and messianic Maitreyism, spoken of with distaste in official sources, which is of concern here. Later Buddhists, including the influential Zanning, took pains to disparage the activities of the monks who supported the empress.[232] However, there must have been others for whom in retrospect her reign seemed as it was advertised -- the advent of a Buddhist utopia wherein monks were enfranchised as the aristocracy.

The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s seem to have been susceptible to this nostalgia insofar as their lineage claim hinges on Wu Zetian's power to bestow Huineng's robe, and by implication the patriarchy, on Zhishen. At the same time the author/s were well aware

[229] Jan Nattier points out that notions of Maitreya as a world-ruler stem from the Chinese apocrypha, whereas in canonical sources there is no blending of spiritual and political rule, the latter remaining strictly subordinate. This is symbolized by the disappearance of the seven jewel talismans of the Cakravartin's rule when Maitreya is enlightened. Nattier 1988: 34.

[230] Forte 1976: 153-159, 199-200.

[231] For a discussion of this prophetic stone inscription conveniently "discovered" in 688, see Forte 1976: 191n.50. The quotation is from Forte's translation of the *Commentary* in *ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

[232] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

that their Shenhui-derived doctrine and practice were radically different from the kind of Buddhism that Wu Zetian had sponsored. The *Lidai fabao ji* account of Zhishen's sojourn at court and his defeat of the Trepiṭaka is designed to showcase the empress's acknowledgment of the superiority of the doctrine of no-thought over the old-fashioned magic of her former favorites. Yet we also see evidence of an ambivalence towards the ruler as mediator of Buddhist legitimacy, an ambivalence that in the *Lidai fabao ji* is neither erased nor entirely resolved.

Note that in addition to Huineng's robe the empress gives Zhishen other gifts, including an embroidered image of Maitreya. I believe this additional gift is not included merely to underline Wu Zetian's generosity. To further entangle the threads of conferral, let us examine Wu Zetian's role as intermediary in light of the transfer of robes involved in Maitreya mythology.

There are many versions of the legend that the Buddha gave his robe to his chief disciple Mahākāśyapa, or exchanged robes with him, in order for Mahākāśyapa to convey the robe to Maitreya when he becomes the next Buddha.[233] As we have seen, the motif of transmission from Buddha to Buddha is evoked in Daoxuan's "Jetavana Diagram Scripture," wherein the *saṃghāṭī* robe is said to await Maitreya's advent in a stūpa on the Jetavana ordination platform.

The famous Tang pilgrim Xuanzang relates a version of the Buddha-Mahākāśyapa conferral in his *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (*The Tang Dynasty Account of the Western Regions*), a version that has been shown to be quite different from both Indian and Chinese canonical sources.[234] The legend of the Buddha's robe as told by Xuanzang is a possible source for a pattern favored in the *Lidai fabao ji*, whereby an intermediary

[233] For excellent discussions of the Indian sources, see Seidel, forthcoming, ("Den'e," pp. 2-5); Jaini 1988: 74-76; Miyaji 1989: 45-48; Shinohara, forthcoming, ("Imaginary Cultic Objects," pp. 25-26) and Silk 1994: 54-68.

[234] Silk 1994: 61.

conveys the robe and authority between two links in a chain that are not in direct contact. Here we must focus neither on the robe nor the bearer/wearers but on the legerdemain, the pattern of transmission. It is repeated twice in the *Lidai fabao ji*: the transmission of the robe from Huineng to Zhishen via Empress Wu prefigures the transmission of robe and Dharma from Wuxiang to Wuzhu via a servant of Wuxiang.

In Xuanzang's version the Buddha, about to enter nirvāṇa, entrusts his gold-embroidered *kāṣāya* to his disciple Mahākāśyapa and at the same time publicly invests him as leader of the community and successor to the transmission of the true Dharma. The Buddha then predicts that twenty years after the first assembly, when Mahākāśyapa will in turn be about to enter nirvāṇa, he will enter Mount Kukkuṭapāda and will stand holding Śākyamuni's robe in his arms. The mountain will enclose him and he will thus await Maitreya. When the future Buddha comes the mountain will open of itself and Mahākāśyapa will transmit the robe to Maitreya in view of the assembled crowd, and thereafter he will ascend into the air and self-combust, entering nirvāṇa.[235]

The distinctive element in Xuanzang's version is that the robe which the Buddha entrusts to Mahākāśyapa is a gold-embroidered *kāṣāya*, the gift of the Buddha's aunt Mahāprajāpatī, the first Buddhist nun and also the woman who raised him after his mother died. This identification of the entrusted robe is unique, and it also conflicts with a separate set of Indian sūtra stories concerning Mahāprajāpatī's gift. Jonathan Silk, in his dissertation on the *Mahāratnakūṭa* tradition, says of these stories: "I know of no version in which Śākyamuni himself actually accepts the proffered robes."[236] Both Shenhui and the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s refer to the robe entrusted to Mahākāśyapa as "gold-embroidered," which is the usual Chinese description of Mahāprajāpatī's gift but not of Śākyamuni's transmission to Mahākāśyapa. Given the fact that Mahāprajāpatī's

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[235] *Da Tang xiyu ji*, *T*. 51 (2087) 919b24-c24.

[236] Silk 1994: 62. For another discussion of the versions of Mahāprajāpatī's gift, see Jaini 1988: 62.

admission to the Saṅgha is strongly linked to the theme of the decline of the Dharma, it is somewhat ironic that the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s, following Shenhui's lead, cite conferral of the gold-embroidered robe as the precedent for the power of the transmission of Bodhidharma's robe to guard against decline of the Dharma.[237]

The recurring motif in the stories of Mahāprajāpatī's gift is the Buddha's refusal, but Silk notes related variants in which upon being refused, "Mahāprajāpatī wanders into the assembly looking for a monk to accept the robes, and all refuse -- except Maitreya." If we recall the discussion of Maitreya in Chapter Three, Maitreya is said to have once been Śākyamuni's disciple Ajita, a novice who received cloth or a robe that had been intended as a gift to the Buddha from his aunt. Silk comments: "This version, of course, which omits Mahākāśyapa completely, provides a direct link between Śākyamuni and Maitreya."[238] For our purposes, the main interest of the story lies in the fact that the link is *not* direct, that the robe is conveyed to Maitreya through the mediation of Mahāprajāpatī.

The Buddha's royal aunt and foster-mother is an ambiguous figure, for her ordination is most famously associated with the Buddha's prediction that women's admission to the order will cause the Dharma to last only five hundred instead of one thousand years.[239] This is not the sort of legacy that would have benefited Wu Zetian, and yet analogies are not difficult to construe. Although the *Lidai fabao ji* account of the empress conveying Bodhidharma's robe between patriarchs makes her a kind of interregnum regent homologous to Mahākāśyapa, her bestowal of princely robes recalls, whether welcome or not, the image of the Buddha's aunt.

In the complex web of associations involved in the *Dayun jing* ideology

[237] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 183b26-c1.

[238] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[239] For discussion of this issue, see Nattier 1991: 28-37.

Mahāprajāpati appears, perhaps an inadvertent shadow, in the company of Wu Zetian's opposites and doubles. Mahāprajāpatī is the "matriarch" of the order of nuns and as such takes her place in a trinity heading the great assembly described at the opening of the *Dayun jing*.[240] She is beside Mahākāśyapa who represents the order of monks and the "Great Cloud Matrix" Bodhisattva (Dayun mizang 大雲密藏) who represents the bodhisattvas. In the *Dayun jing* this bodhisattva is the Buddha's interlocutor, and he also serves as a foil for the devī who-would-be-queen identified as the empress in the *Dayun jing* commentary.

In the *Zhengming jing* 證明經 (Attestation Scripture),[241] an apocryphal scripture used to support Wu Zetian's reign, there is an apocalyptic vision of the birth of a Buddhist kingdom in China in which the bodhisattva Samantabhadra has the role of avenging angel and protective midwife. In one passage Samantabhadra is called Mahāprajāpatī (in transcription), because Mahāprajāpatī's name was translated into Chinese as Dasheng zhu 大生主 (Great Lord of Beings), an epithet of Samantabhadra.[242] This sūtra was quoted in the commentary to the *Dayun jing* 大雲經 to encourage people to connect the utopian realm prophesied by Samantabhadra with the reign of Wu Zetian.

In keeping with the taint of hubris for which Wu Zetian is most consistently remembered by Chinese historians, the precedent she established of bestowing robes on monks was a double-edged honoring. The story of the Buddha's aunt is the *locus classicus* for the recurring trope of the monk who refuses to give up his tattered robes and accept fine clothing from a wealthy lay devotee. Although the canonical literature also abounds with words of praise and evocations of merit for those who give food, clothing,

[240] Forte 1976: 253.

[241] *Puxian pusa shuo ci zhengming jing* 普賢菩薩説此證明經 (Scripture of Attestation Spoken by the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra), *T.* 85 (2879). For textual analysis and partial translation, see Forte 1976: 271-280.

[242] Forte 1976: 276.

bedding and medicine for the use of the Saṅgha, there was evidently ambiguity regarding a layperson, even or perhaps especially if a ruler and an alleged bodhisattva, who would pointedly bestow costly robes on individual monks.

In this light we might also cast a glance at the empress's ill-starred *mingtang* 明堂 project. Antonino Forte delves into the history of this imperial ritual structure in a study focussing on the *mingtang* of Wu Zetian. He says of the significance of the *mingtang*: "In fact, before being a structure or a group of actual architectural structures, more or less sporadically realized throughout time, the *mingtang* was an opinion, an immanent idea bound up with Chinese civilization . . . a conception running throughout its long history."[243] The empress's grandiose conception, if it had succeeded, would have physically and symbolically established Buddhism's dominance over Confucianism and Daoism in the main ritual edifice of the state cult.

Moreover, Forte suggests that the popular will to realize this vision was fanned into flame by the utopian appeal of the empress's ideology as disseminated in the *Dayun jing* commentary and the *Zhengming jing*. He says: "For the time being, I shall merely make the suggestion that the *mingtang* could have been built mainly on the wave of the religious fervor of the Maitreyism of those who worked on it. By constructing the *mingtang* they were convinced that they were building the Huacheng 化城 mentioned in the *Zhengming jing*."[244] Forte then argues that the empress's lover Huaiyi was a pivotal figure in channeling Maitreyist devotion towards this project, and notes that the elite Buddhist establishment was initially willing to form an alliance with this millenarian element.[245]

However, the huge *tiantang* 天堂 tower that was to have been the Buddhist

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[243] Forte 1988a: 205.

[244] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

[245] *Ibid.*, pp. 209-219.

centerpiece of the complex was destroyed by wind in 689, and then the entire complex, as yet incomplete, was burnt down in 694. This last disaster, like the burning of Yongning si near the end of the Northern Wei, appeared to vindicate those who condemned the dynasty's Buddhist orientation. The timing of the fire was almost too symbolic, for it occurred just the day after an inaugural Pañcavārṣika (*wuzhe dahui* 無遮大會, unrestricted great assembly) was held in the *mingtang*. The Pañcavārṣika was an important Buddhist ritual feast symbolically uniting all classes of devotees that "when run by Buddhist kings, essentially represented the unity between subjects and kings."[246]

Though Wu Zetian's reign would continue for over a decade more, the unity had been destroyed and the Buddhist establishment moved quickly to dissociate itself from the disaster:

> The first *mingtang* had been completely destroyed and reformist Buddhism, which had not considered it unbecoming to enter an alliance with Huaiyi, now had no hesitation in rejecting and sacrificing him in order to save itself, together with what little of the Buddhist policy could still be saved.
>
> It was the 694 fire which caused the rupture between erudite and aristocratic Buddhism and Maitreyism. If this is the way things stood, there is no reason to think that prior to December 694 official Buddhism did not accept the Buddhist tower of the *tiantang*. Even though it was a Maitreyic tower, there is in fact no doubt that, thanks to this very tower, Buddhism as a whole had not only triumphantly penetrated the heart of the Palatine City, but had practically turned the entire *mingtang* into a predominantly Buddhist institution . . . .[247]

Immediately after the fire numerous critics pressed for abandonment of the project.

[246] *Ibid.*, p. 232. In spite of the suspicious timing, Forte concurs with the empress's stated conviction that the fire was accidental. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

[247] *Ibid.*, p. 230.

In the official Liu Chengqing's 劉承慶 memorial to the empress, he argues: "To limit oneself to venerating that 'teaching' is the essential thing! Why does one need a 'purple palace', in order to realize enlightenment?"[248] McRae has suggested that Shenxiu's teachings can also be read as an attempt to preach formlessness to the empress in the aftermath of the failure of her dreams.[249] Faure also has linked the shift from doctrinal eclecticism to the "will to orthodoxy" with this crucial period. The empress and the new elite who had been empowered by her began to seek a more respectable yet not hidebound Buddhist partnership, which they found in Shenxiu and his followers.[250] In this context, Shenhui appears on the scene as imitator rather than innovator, peddler of a popular nostrum against "material Buddhism." Though Southern School Chan was indeed more continuous with its surroundings than polemical accounts allow, the polemics did alter the doctrine. In his sermon at the *wuzhe dahui* 無遮大會 at the Huatai Dayun monastery, former site of dissemination of the *Dayun jing* ideology, Shenhui redefined the limits or extremes of the "essential thing."

Wu Zetian's attempt to permanently raise the level of the Saṅgha perhaps catalyzed the will to transcend even the monk's status once it became so unequivocally a mantle of worldly power. As noted, Emperor Wu of the Liang donned monk's robes and then had his minister ransom him and his divested royal raiment back from the monastery, establishing an "inexhaustible" and independent financial base for the Saṅgha. In contrast, Wu Zetian's edifice and her lavish gifts reached towards monarchical assumption of the power to confer legitimacy on monks. The *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra* invocation of an immaterial "robe of the tathāgatas" may echo reactions against the empress's presumption, but the distinction between formal and formless Buddhism

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248 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

249 McRae, forthcoming (2C 26).

250 Faure 1988: 38–41.

became even more apparent during the era of Shenhui's activities, the reign of the Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756).

According to the Song Buddhist historian Zanning, the practice of bestowing the purple robe (*ziyi* 紫衣) did not occur during the reigns of the pious emperors Zhongzong 中宗 (705-710) or Ruizong 睿宗 (710-712) but was taken up again by Xuanzong.[251] Xuanzong was notably ambivalent about Buddhism, well aware of its role in the "renegade" reigns of Wu Zetian and the Taiping Princess, but he supported the clergy in a clearly-defined and limited capacity. It has been argued that during the reign of Xuanzong we see the first signs of a different kind of imperial attitude towards Buddhism.[252] This attitude differs from earlier attempts to control Buddhism by outright persecution, differs from the massive scale of Wu Zetian's co-option, and differs again from imperial policy that suffered Buddhism to flourish as a kind of side-bet alongside the dominant Confucian ritual and archival concerns. With Xuanzong we see attempts to persuade the loose network of Buddhist institutions to enforce critical standards that were arguably of benefit to the network itself.

Xuanzong's decrees proscribed market-place proselytization, curbed irregular ordination and temple-building, prohibited merchants from casting images and copying scriptures for profit, and strictly limited fraternization between lay and ordained.[253] These measures contributed to greater monastic control, and yet at the same time "routinized the

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[251] In the *Da Song sengshi lue* 大宋僧史略 (The Song Dynasty Compendium of Monastic History), *T.* 54 (2176) 248c-249a. However, Du Guangting's 杜廣廷 (850-933) history of imperial support of Daoism, the *Lidai chongdao ji* 歷代崇道記, claims an earlier Tang precedent and states that Taizong conferred a purple robe on the priest Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知. Weinstein 1987: 6; 153 n. 2. Moreover, Zanning's other main work includes at least one example of a purple robe bestowed by Zhongzong, who is said to have given one to Huian in 706. *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2061) 823c11-12. See Huang Minzhi 1989: 443-511.

[252] See Tonami 1988. I am also indebted to a talk given by Stephen Teiser at Stanford University, Feb. 8, 1995, entitled "On the Idea of a Chinese Buddhist Canon."

[253] *Tang huiyao* 唐會要, 47&49; *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記, *T.* 49 (2035) 374-375. See Tonami 1988: 31-32 and Faure, forthcoming (Ch. 3, pp. 1-5).

charisma" such that the center shifted towards decorum and ritual, an atmosphere in which Daoist priests and Tantric masters throve. It is noteworthy that after centuries of protest against imperial attempts to require clergy to pay obeisance to the emperor and their parents, there is no record of clerical resistance to Xuanzong's 733 decree to that effect.[254]

This is certainly not to claim that no emperor before Xuanzong had ever managed to control monks. Yet previous policies had aimed primarily to curb Buddhism from without, whereas eighth century edicts seem more successfully designed to set centralized administrative standards to work *within* the monastic network. For example, in 724 Xuanzong issued an edict instituting an exam system for the clergy and ordered that those who could not memorize and recite the requisite amount of scripture be laicized. The decree further stipulated that skill in meditation would not be an acceptable substitute.[255]

At the same time, Xuanzong is also well known for his predilection for masters of esoteric Buddhism and their thaumaturgic powers. Outside of the sphere of these favorites, however, the ordinary monk was beginning to be regularized, acquiring worldly status that put him on a par with an official but steadily losing the other-worldly status that allowed him to look benevolently down upon the emperor.

Shenhui's robe-rhetoric may have been an attempt to regain this special separate status. In an insightful article, John Jorgensen draws connections between Shenhui's notions of patriarchal succession and the complex issues surrounding Tang imperial succession that were current in Shenhui's day. Joregensen discusses Zongmi's commentary correlating Chan patriarchal succession and Chinese ancestral rites, in which a founder and six linear descendents are necessary in order to establish the ancestral

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[254] Tonami 1988: 39-45. Faure cites a record of protest against such an edict in 714, early in Xuanzong's reign (*Tang huiyao*, 47: 836, see Faure, forthcoming, Ch. 3, pp. 2), but Tonami claims that "there is not a trace of resistance" to the edict of 733.

[255] Weinstein 1987: 110-111; 188-189 n. 20-22.

temple of a clan or dynasty. In the aftermath of Empress Wu's interregnum there were disputes over the sequence of the tablets in the Tang ancestral temple, and Jorgensen demonstrates that Shenhui's rhetoric echoed or perhaps even inspired so-called "Southern Learning" (*nanxue* 南學) factionalists at court who were moving towards unequivocal ritual erasure of her reign.[256] Jorgensen says:

> If Tsung-mi correctly interpreted the ideas of Shenhui, then Shenhui is making a two-pronged attack on Northern Ch'an by associating it with the Empress Wu. Firstly he alleges that Northern Ch'an was an illegitimate succession like that of Empress Wu who reigned while Emperors Chung-tsung and Jui-tsung were still alive, with two masters per generation, or two suns in the sky. Secondly there was guilt by association with the perverted 'materialistic' Buddhism of her times, a perversion that was probably due to a woman being on the throne.
>
> There was another political dimension to Shen-hui's emphasis on the sixth generation. Yanagida Seizan has suggested that a comparison was being made by Shen-hui with the lineage of the T'ang house itself. If Empress Wu is eliminated as being illegitimate, ruling while two former emperors were still alive, this would make Hsüan-tsung the sixth emperor.[257]

It was precisely during Shenhui's generation that fixing the identity of a sixth patriarch or sixth Tang emperor became a crucial issue, for this would determine the composition of the foundational ancestral phalanx. Bodhidharma's robe *qua* the robe of the tathāgatas can therefore be seen to serve as talisman for Shenhui's implicit claim to be the seventh ancestor in the restored dynasty of the "Southern School." Shenhui writes:

> The robe is the verification of the Dharma and the Dharma is en-

[256] Jorgensen 1987: 103-114.

[257] Jorgensen 1987: 108.

doctrinization of the robe.[258] Robe and Dharma mutually transfer and are handed down without alteration. Without the robe one does not spread forth the Dharma; without the Dharma one does not receive the robe. . . . To know empty quietude is to fully realize the Dharma-body, and to be truly liberated.[259]

Empress Wu's new clothes and Emperor Xuanzong's livery had both in their different ways threatened to bind the spiritual to the political realm, and so Shenhui took up Bodhidharma's empty robe in order to reestablish the Chan patriarchs in the dharmakāya realm of non-duality where they reigned supreme.[260] The *Lidai fabao ji* is more faithful to Shenhui's doctrine, practice, and rhetoric than any of its rivals for "Southern School" legitimacy. Yet, in letting Bodhidharma's robe pass through Wu Zetian's hands, it allows the primary symbol of that legitimacy to pass through precisely the milieu that was the focus of Shenhui's most vehement attack.

Perhaps the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s were inadvertently correct in acknowledging the pivotal role that the empress's mixed blessing played in the formation of the "Southern School." In tandem with her lavish support of the Saṅgha, her ideological projects set the realm reverberating with the apocalyptic tones and imagery of immanence. Her realm of the Dharma was two-tiered, both temporal and metaphysical, while Shenhui's sudden teaching was immanent in extremity, realized exclusively in its patriarchal bearers and inclusively in each individual hearer. Consider this passage from the above-mentioned *Zhengming jing*, in which homage to the empress's new mandate, like that rendered the invisible robe of the tathāgatas, serves to distinguish the ordinary from the discerning

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[258] *Yi wei fa xin, fa shi yi zong* 衣為法信法是衣宗.

[259] *Dunwu wushang banruo song* 頓悟無生般若頌, S. 468; Hu Shih [1930] 1970: 195.

[260] It is therefore somewhat ironic that, in order to quell the disputes that Shenhui's claims precipitated among the Saṅgha, his heir Zongmi appealed to an 796 edict by the Emperor Dezong 德宗 confirming Shenhui's status as seventh patriarch. See *Yuanjue jing dashu chao*, ZZ. vol. 14: 277b-c. The earliest source to refer to Shenhui as the seventh patriarch is the Longmen stele of 765. See McRae 1987: 237.

who alone are able to see the "luminous king of the Dharma":

> Then in the Sahā [world] there will not be the five kinds of people. All corruption will be cured, and all will be given the names of Bodhisattvas . . . . The countries will be Buddhist countries, the regions will be Buddhist regions, the commanderies will be Buddhist commanderies, the districts will be Buddhist districts, the villages will be Buddhist villages, the neighborhoods will be Buddhist neighborhoods. All will assemble in the Transformation City. . . and they will be able to see this Luminous King. . . . If there are distrustful people they will not be able to see this Dharma.[261]

Wu Zetian's "material Buddhism" and its utopian underpinnings disturbingly blurred the fine line between a manifest and unmanifest Buddhist realm. I suggest that Shenhui's concept of the patriarchy was an attempt to redraw that line, the shape of the robe serving as an outline of the tathāgata realm with a monarchy separate from both secular and ordinary institutional Buddhist authority.

The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s apparently evoked the empress as a secular authority separate from the pettiness of Chan in-fighting alluded to in the lament over frequent thefts of the robe. Yet in doing so they recalled a threat that had catalyzed the ideological charge of Chan succession disputes in the first place. By including Wu Zetian, briefly and fictitiously, in its chronicle of Chan succession, the *Lidai fabao ji* allows us a glimpse of historical verisimilitude that was soon discredited in the gathering momentum of "Southern School" Chan.

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[261] *Zhengming jing*, *T.* 85 (2879) 1366b9-17. Adapted from partial translation in Forte 1976: 280.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE BAO TANG SCHOOL

> As he was not one of those rough spirits who would strip fair Truth of every little shadowy vestment in which time and teeming fancies love to array her -- and some of which become her pleasantly enough, serving, like the waters of her well, to add new graces to the charms they half conceal and half suggest, and to awaken interest and pursuit rather than languor and indifference -- as, unlike this stern and obdurate class, he loved to see the goddess crowned with those garlands of wild flowers which tradition wreathes for her gentle wearing, and which are often freshest in their homeliest shapes, -- he trod with a light step and bore with a light hand upon the dust of centuries, unwilling to demolish any of the airy shrines that had been raised above it, if one good feeling or affection of the human heart were hiding thereabouts.
>
> -- Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*

Wuzhu takes center stage in this chapter and, as in the *Lidai fabao ji*, the history of Buddhism in China becomes the backdrop for his dramatic entrance. Wuzhu's lines may claim erasure of the actor -- "In meditation there is neither exiting nor entering"[1] -- but the *Lidai fabao ji* account establishes his unique character. Key transmission themes previously introduced will now be discussed in the context of Wuzhu's story: the transmission of Huineng's robe, the ordination platform and formless precepts, and the relationship between Saṅgha and secular authority in the light of Bao Tang antinomianism. Speculation in the previous chapter about the role of the Empress Wu will be developed into speculation concerning the role of women in the *Lidai fabao ji*.

[1] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 195b1.

The chapter will close with the scene of Wuzhu's death.

To sum up where we have been and where we are going, one could say that we have been following a Buddhism modeled on kingship through the first part of the *Lidai fabao ji*, whereas we now enter into kinship concerns with the second part.[2] Kingship is an image of the diachronic presentation of Buddhist transmission carried through emblems of legitimacy such as scriptures, rituals, and talismanic objects. As we have seen, Southern School ideology is replete with royal or imperial references, and the succession of biographies of the Chan masters and the story of the robe are at once dynastic history and historical romance.[3] The kinship mode, on the other hand, is synchronic; stories of Bao Tang foes and followers serve to establish hierarchies, clarify family values, and demonstrate the effectiveness of Wuzhu's patriarchy.[4] To resort to another metaphor, this demarcation of trunk versus branches was characteristic of a number of works associated with Southern School offshoots and is presented with intricate elegance in the *Jingde chuandeng lu*.

In the *Lidai fabao ji* the shift from Dharma kings to Dharma kin, or from trunk to branches, is signalled by a shift in style as well as context. The first part of the *Lidai fabao ji* is largely a pastiche of earlier material or imitations of traditional Buddhist scholarship. I refer here to the sources discussed in previous chapters such as the legend of Emperor Ming, the modified *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* biographies, the knot of sūtra quotations, and material from the East Mountain School and from Shenhui.

In the second part of the *Lidai fabao ji* the use of other Buddhist material is confined

[2] I am indebted for the kingship/kinship image to a paper by Mihwa Choi, see Choi 1996.

[3] It is perhaps not irrelevant that in the flowering of fiction during the Ming and the Qing, authors of novels and dramas often employed a symbolic object, such as a stone or a hairpin, to tie together the different generations, groups, and levels of the story.

[4] McRae argues that incorporation of the genealogical mode was one reason for Chan's popularity. McRae 1992: 359.

to Wuzhu's quotations from sūtras. The impressive effect with which Wuzhu deploys his quotations reveals the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s' reverence for treasures from the storehouse of Buddhist lore, but it also reveals a certain sense of editorial license to be not over-exact in reproducing the originals. The quotations have an almost talismanic function, in that they are not always clearly related to the topic at hand yet invariably produce awe in those at whom they are aimed. Moreover, they are imbedded in the midst of other modes characteristic of Wuzhu's discourse -- the telegraphic, almost hypnotic, recurring phrases, the note of what we now cannot help but think of as pomposity, and the earthy, piquant stories. We will see examples of all these elements in the following sections.

In the late Tang both Chan literature and secular fiction developed in new directions, and the second part of the *Lidai fabao ji* reflects these trends. As with Tang *chuanqi* 傳奇 (transmitted marvels) fiction, what were once preparatory sketches and notes on the margins of the official literature became central features of a new style. In both Chan lore and *chuanqi*, verbal interactions in ordinary settings are used to establish the relative spiritual or moral standing of the characters rather than displays of supernormal powers or exemplary acts of virtue. It is significant that the adoption of a sparser and more colloquial mode in Chan literature coincided with similar stylistic reforms formulated and practiced by late Tang literati such as Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824). Though Han Yu is famous for criticizing imperial participation in perfervid and credulous worship of a Buddhist relic, the sensibilities that prompted his memorial had much in common with Chan discourse on formless practice.[5] There were aspects of Chan that Han Yu found sympathetic, as Charles Hartman notes: "Although Han Yü did not share the Ch'an school's need for an historical face-to-face transmission lineage, he did share their

[5] The other faces of formlessness have been revealed by Bernard Faure's work on Chan mummies and relics. See Faure 1991: 132-178.

partiality for face-to-face oral transmission of a teaching method."[6]

Like Han Yu, Chan writers were at pains to present innovation as excavation, to establish reform on ancient foundations. And indeed, new Chan genres such as *yulu* 語錄 (discourse record), *chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄 (lamp transmission record), and *gongan* 公案 (public case) are consistent with previous patterns of development in stylistic convention.[7] Chan genres are unique, yet complement and refer to each other in a familiar manner. As Faure and Griffith Foulk have argued, Chan eccentricities depended on a bedrock of traditional Buddhist practices and institutions.[8] Just as accounts of the bizarre (*zhiguai* 志怪) complemented official didactic "arrayed" biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳) and the brevity and wit of *qingtan* 清談 (pure conversation) characterizations were related to the more formal dialogical treatises of the third and fourth centuries, so too did the turning words, scatological references, and shouts of Chan depend on daily recitation of the sūtras.[9] The appeal of the *Lidai fabao ji* is that the sūtras and scatology are not yet divided into separate genres.

## The Robe Transmission between Wuxiang and Wuzhu

There is a certain tension between the *Lidai fabao ji* claims to a superior transmission of the doctrine of no-thought and its reliance on the mind-to-mind transmission of the Chan lineage as its ultimate source of authority. The master-disciple exchange most emphasized in the text, that between Wuxiang 無相 (684-762) and Wuzhu 無住 (714-

[6] Hartman 1986: 161. Scholars have also discerned Chan influences at work in the construction of Neo-Confucian lineages. See McRae 1992: 359-360; Wilson 1995.

[7] For an excellent discussion of the emergence of the Chan *yulu* genre and its relation to earlier Buddhist genres, see Berling 1987. For a related discussion of the "encounter" versus "mārga" paradigms of cultivation, see McRae 1992; and on Neo-Confucian *yulu*, see Gardiner 1991.

[8] See Faure 1991 & Foulk, forthcoming.

[9] For a fascinating study of connections among early medieval genres, see Campany 1996. On the relationship between *qingtan* and Buddhist treatises, see Zürcher 1959: 93-94.

774), reflects the tension between Wuzhu's exceptional realization and the ideology of the perfect meeting of minds. In each transmission the identity between master and disciple is stressed, and yet it is also said that Zhishen 智詵 (609-702), his disciple Chuji 處寂 (669-736), and even Chuji's disciple Wuxiang did not preach the ultimate teaching.

The following passage establishes identity between Wuxiang and Wuzhu through the trope of mysterious resemblance, with reference to the doctrine of the "transformation body" (*huashen* 化身), the manifestations that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas take in order to teach beings:

> It happened that the merchant Cao Xiang 曹瓌 came to pay his respects [to Wuzhu] and asked, "Have you, Venerable, ever been to Jiannan 劍南? Do you know the Venerable Kim 金 (i.e. Wuxiang)?"
>
> [Wuzhu] answered, "I don't know him."
>
> Xiang said, "Your features are exactly like those of the Venerable Kim. You have a mole above the bridge of your nose, and the shape of your face so resembles that of the Venerable in our locale that one could even say there is no difference. It must be [manifestation] of a transformation-body."
>
> The Venerable [Wuzhu] asked, "So the layman has come from Jiannan -- [tell me], what doctrine does that Venerable preach?
>
> Cao Xiang replied, "Non-recollection, non-thinking, and not being deluded."[10] (Cao Xiang then relates an incident in which Wuxiang tried to get him to apply these teachings in his own life, but he did not understand

[10] *Wuyi wunian mowang* 無憶無念莫妄. The last character, *wang*, meaning false or delusion, is the focus of some controversy. There is a passage in the *Lidai fabao ji* that specifies that this is the character and meaning intended (*T.* 51 (2075) 189a14-21), but Zongmi considered the use of 妄 to be Wuzhu's mistaken understanding of Wuxiang's own usage *mowang* 莫忘, not-forgetting. *Yuanjue jing dashu chao*, *ZZ.* vol. 14: 278d; Kamata 1971: 306. In his translation of the *Lidai fabao ji*, Yanagida opted to use 莫忘, see Yanagida 1976a: 21-22, 152-153, and 211. However, the uncertainty also reflects the prominence of 妄 in Shenhui's interpretation of śīla, samādhi and prajñā: "The nonactivation of the false mind (*wang-hsin pu ch'i*) is morality; the absence of the false mind (*wu wang-hsin*) is meditation; and the knowledge of the mind's absence of falsity (*chih hsin wu-wang*) is wisdom." *Tanyu*, McRae, trans., forthcoming (2B: 6). According to the *Lidai fabao ji*, Wuxiang's interpretation of *śīla*, samādhi and prajñā are more advanced: "No-recollection is the precepts, no-thought is meditation, and not being deluded is wisdom." *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185a14.

> Wuxiang's point.) . . . . When the Venerable heard this teaching he understood clearly, and from afar he met the Venerable Kim face-to-face.[11]

Alongside this replication of the Dharma, the *panjiao* 判教 (classification of the teachings) of the Bao Tang is also established. Zhishen and Chuji's teachings are explicitly bracketed:

> [Wuxiang] also would say, "These three phrases of mine are doctrines that were originally transmitted by the Ancestral Master Bodhidharma. I do not say that this is what was taught by the Venerable Shen (i.e. Zhishen) or the Venerable Tang 唐 (i.e. Chuji)."
>
> He also said, "It has been permitted that the disciple has true understanding surpassing that of his masters. Because the Venerable Shen and Tang did not expound the ultimate teaching, I have by a winding course inherited the Robe of Verification." The Venerable Kim thus did not draw from areas in which the Venerables Shen and Tang had preached. Always in his teachings on the precepts from his seat he said directly, "These three phrases of mine that were transmitted by the Ancestral Master Bodhidharma are the gate of perfect maintenance. Thought not arising is the precepts gate, thought not arising is the meditation gate, thought not arising is the wisdom gate. No-thought is none other than the complete fulfillment of precepts, meditation, and wisdom.[12]

Shenhui's teachings are however implicitly admitted, with qualifications. As noted, Shenhui is not part of the Bao Tang lineage, but a passage on his life and teachings is placed in between the section on Wuxiang and the beginning of the account of Wuzhu. The ambivalent rating of Wuxiang's teachings is put into Shenhui's mouth, perhaps because that was considered a pre-established site of hazardous judgements: "Kim of

[11] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 186b8-17.

[12] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185b6-13.

Yizhou 益州 is a Chan Master, but he also did not manage to preach the ultimate teaching. Although he did not preach the ultimate teaching, the Buddha-Dharma exists only at his place."[13]

The scene in which Wuzhu and Wuxiang meet is a compelling one, with at least as much dramatic merit as the better-known *Platform Sūtra* story of the meeting between Huineng and Hongren.

> In the first month of the second year of the Qianyuan 乾元 era (759), [Wuzhu] reached Jingzhong 淨眾 monastery in Chengdu 成都 Sub-prefecture. When he first arrived he met Master Anqian 安乾, who led him in to see the Venerable Kim. The Venerable became very joyful upon seeing him. The Venerable Kim delegated Master Anqian to act as host, and he settled Wuzhu in the cloister under the bell-tower. It was just at the time of an ordination [retreat], and that night Wuzhu followed the crowd and received ordination. It lasted three days and three nights.[14]
>
> Every day in the midst of the assembly the Venerable Kim would intone in a loud voice, "Why do you not go into the mountains? What benefit is there in lingering?" His close attendant disciples thought this strange, [and said] "The Venerable Kim has never said anything like this before. Why would he suddenly come out with these words?" But the Venerable Wuzhu silently entered the mountains.[15]

Wuxiang and Wuzhu's subsequent long-distance relationship can be seen as a device to explain away the fact that Wuzhu was never in fact Wuxiang's disciple. At the same time, it is a powerful means of expressing the formless teaching, not bound by physical presence or monastic formalities. The independence and privations of Wuzhu's mountain

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[13] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185c20-21.

[14] Three days and three nights may be meant as a parallel to the story of the transmission between Hongren and Huineng, in which Huineng was in Hongren's room for three days and three nights. See Chapter Four, p. 250.

[15] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 186c2-9.

are contrasted with the order, elegance, and decadence of the Jingzhong monastic establishment near Chengdu. In the scene immediately following the passage above, Wuzhu, from his mountain-top, answers a question put to Wuxiang in his hall miles away. His answer is a challenge to the monastic community, as well as an image of his mind-to-mind identity with Wuxiang.

> Later the Venerable Kim thought of him and said, "Why doesn't he come?" The senior monks Kong 空 and Qin 秦 wanted to be able to recognize [Wuzhu, and so they said,] "We fear that one day we might chance to meet but not know who he is."
>
> [From the mountains] the Venerable [Wuzhu] faced towards them with a keen glance and exclaimed, "Although I am here the Venerable Kim and I see each other constantly. If you want mutual recognition, we are face to face across a thousand *li* (Chinese miles). With my regards, I will preach a parable for you."
>
> (Wuzhu then relates an episode from the sūtras in which all the disciples flock to see the Buddha when he returns from preaching to his mother in Heaven. A nun resorts to magical powers to be first in line to greet the Buddha, but it turns out that the disciple Subhuti, who was meditating in his cell miles away, was really the first. The Buddha tells the nun, "Subhuti is continuously in samādhi in a stone cell , and so he is able to see my Dharma-body. You came rushing to see my form-body, and so you are last." Wuzhu then concludes this lecture-from-afar to the Jingzhong monks by saying: ) "The Buddha has given a clear mandate, and that is why I do not go [to see the Venerable Kim.]"[16]

Wuzhu's active challenge from afar contrasts with his absence from the story of how he received of the patents of legitimacy, the robe and Wuxiang's prediction confirming the future of the transmission. According to the *Lidai fabao ji*, the robe and the message

[16] *Ibid.*, *T*. 51 (2075) 186c9-28. The story of the nun seeing the Buddha will be discussed at greater length in the final section of this chapter.

were supposed to have been conveyed to Wuzhu by an intermediary. This comes about because during the time that Wuzhu was sequestered in the mountains (759-766) he told a lay disciple, Dong Xuan 董璿, that he should go to Wuxiang to receive the precepts. Wuzhu sent him off with a gift of tea for Wuxiang, and when Dong Xuan went to Chengdu and presented the tea to Wuxiang, he lied and said he was a personal disciple of Wuzhu's.[17] In the following scene, when Dong Xuan is about to return to the mountains Wuxiang gives him Huineng's robe and other articles to give to Wuzhu:

> On the fifteenth day (of the 4th month, 762), [Dong Xuan] went to see the Venerable Kim [and said], "I wish to return to the Baiyai 白崖 Mountains, I am at your command."
>
> At that, [Wuxiang] sent away his personal attendant disciples, [saying], "You must all go outside the hall." Then he summoned Dong Xuan into the hall. The Venerable then brought out the *kāṣāya* that the rarest few among men have had in their keeping and revealed it to Xuan, [saying], "This was bestowed upon the Venerable Shen by Empress [Wu] Zetian. The Venerable Shen bestowed it upon the Venerable Tang (i.e. Chuji), the Venerable Tang gave it to me, and I transmit it to Chan Master Wuzhu. This robe has long been cherished, don't let anyone know of it." At these words he became choked with sobbing and said, "This robe has been passed down and received directly from master to disciple, make utmost effort, utmost effort!" Then he took from his own person his *kāṣāya*,

[17] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 187a27-b14. According to a personal communication from John Kieschnick, the *Lidai fabao ji* contains the earliest reference to Chinese monks drinking tea. Tea was a special product of Sichuan, and the general popularity of tea-drinking was said to have spread after the An Lushan rebellion, perhaps as a result of the Emperor Xuanzong's sojourn in Chengdu. There are two other passages concerning tea in the *Lidai fabao ji*. In one of them, Wuzhu composes a gāthā in praise of tea: "The obscure valley produces the numinous herb that serves as a medium for entering the Way. Wood-cutters gather its leaves, and the delicious flavor flows into an earthen vessel. Pure void settles the void-consciousness, bright mind illuminates the terrace of wisdom. It does not wear down one's vital strength, it directly moves the Dharma-gates to open." *Ibid.*, 193b4-6. In the other passage, Wuzhu is roused to ire in defense of tea: "The Venerable was drinking tea, and Master Wuyou said to the Venerable, 'Drinking three or five cups of tea and sitting with eyes closed -- it's just like a strong fellow grabbing a thin man by the waist, it seems rather pretentious.' The Venerable told Master Wuyou, 'Don't indulge in idle talk. You didn't eat mud dumplings in the [famine of the] Yongchun 永淳 era (682-683).'" (i.e. "You young whippersnapper.") *Ibid.*, 195a14-17.

> under and outer robes, and his sitting cloth, altogether seventeen things,[18] [and said], "I am getting old; you take these clothes and convey them secretly to Chan Master Wuzhu, and transmit my words: 'Take care of yourself, make utmost effort, utmost effort! It is not yet time to leave the mountains, wait three to five years, and only leave when a person of consequence welcomes you.'" At that he despatched Dong Xuan, [saying], "Go quickly and do not tell anyone." When he had seen Dong Xuan go the Venerable Kim said to himself, "These things go tardily but will get through in the end."[19]

Later, when his disciples ask him about the robe, he says, "My Dharma has gone to the place of non-abiding (*wuzhu*). The robe is hanging from the top of a tree, no one has got it."[20] Still later it is revealed that the robe made it to Wuzhu only after further complications. Some army officers who have met Wuzhu in the mountains tell this story:

> We saw that this Chan Master looked exactly like the Venerable Kim. When I, Ti (Qin Ti 秦逖), and the others first saw him, it was just as if he were the Venerable Kim's transformation-body. We ventured to question him and remained for some time. We learned that the Venerable Kim's robe and bowl[21] had previously been despatched through a messenger, who hid them for two years and did not deliver them, and then sold them to a monk. On the night that the monk obtained the robe, a spirit [appeared and ordered him to] send it back to its original owner, [saying], "If you do not return it, you are most certainly throwing away your life." The buyer exchanged it, and reported what had happened. After that [the messenger]

[18] The monk's kit according to the Vinaya includes eighteen articles of use, of which the three robes are collectively #3, and the sitting cloth is #6.

[19] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 187b14-26.

[20] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 187c2-3.

[21] The bowl is not specifically mentioned among the items Wuxiang sent to Wuzhu, and Shenhui's account of transmission emphasizes only the robe. This may be the earliest mention of the "robe and bowl," but they are also mentioned together in the nearly contemporaneous *Caoqi dashi bie zhuan*. See Yanagida 1976a: 197.

couldn't sell it, and restored it to the Chan Master's place.[22]

The *Lidai fabao ji*'s subsequent rebuttal of the story that Wuzhu actually stole the robe is our first clue that there *was* such a story. It occurs in the context of an attempt by some Vinaya masters to appropriate Wuxiang's lineage in the Jingzhong monastery for themselves. They have Wuxiang's cloister and meditation hall turned into a Vinaya cloister and hall, they produce another robe and claim it is Wuxiang's, and they try to discourage the local officials from welcoming Wuzhu.[23]

> Vinaya Master Yingyao 英耀 replied, "Inviting this Chan Master Wuzhu would be unwise. Inviting this monk would be profoundly disadvantageous for the 'flow of black' (i.e. the clergy)."
>
> The Minister [Yan 嚴] asked, "Why would it be disadvantageous for the clergy?"
>
> [Yingyao] replied, "There is a craftsman in Minzhou 汶州 who is an inlay-artisan of average merit. He got a *kāṣāya* [as payment for work done], which had an estimated value of twenty-thousand cash. That Chan Master snatched the craftsman's robe and never returned it, saying, 'This was bestowed on me by the Venerable Kim.' Moreover, he does not practice formal (*shixiang* 事相) worship and recitation. It is because of these things that it would be disadvantageous for the clergy."
>
> The Vice-Director [Cui 崔] said to the Vinaya Masters, "Previously when I was a cavalry officer in the western mountains, I learned the true situation. Why do you Vinaya masters resort to slander?" So saying, he left his seat. The faces of the malicious faction drained of color, they were utterly at a loss. Their malice was thus thwarted.[24]

Here the specific transgression of theft is a pretext for the real issue, the threat that

[22] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075)188a15-20.

[23] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 188a29-b13.

[24] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 188b13-21.

Wuzhu's non-conformity and Wuxiang's sanction of it poses to the mass of black-robed clergy. Wuzhu's possession of the robe and his self-possession in the face of challenges and difficulties shows that he truly has the transmission. In terms of the mystique of legitimacy, he not only possesses the talisman but also the inner worth to call forth the mysterious response. But what is it that he possesses? I would like to briefly develop a kind of structuralist exercise in order to raise the issue in a different manner than heretofore. In attempting to flush out the notions of "transmission" and "Wuzhu" the discussion must also stumble through a patch or two of tangled self-referentiality, for which I beg the reader's indulgence.

I will take four of the *Lidai fabao ji* figures as representatives of the range within which the tension between formal and formless transmission of authority oscillated: Zhishen, tied to the old Buddhist order of the capitals, and Wuzhu of the new provincial Chan trend embody the farthest extremes defining the Bao Tang school, while Shenhui and Wuxiang can be said to occupy intermediate positions. By "old order" I mean the scholastic Buddhist establishments of Changan and Luoyang associated with centripetal forces of the Tang imperium and aristocratic elites, and by new order I mean the increasingly autonomous forces of the provincial military and administrative elites associated with "naturalist" Southern Chan Buddhism. There are traditional dates dividing old from new -- for the political order it is the An Lushan rebellion of 755, and for the Buddhist order it is Shenhui's challenge of 732. While arraying Zhishen, Shenhui, Wuxiang and Wuzhu along an historical and doctrinal continuum is primarily a heuristic device, I hope that it is more suggested by the *Lidai fabao ji* than imposed upon it. The scale of old order to new order is consistent with the text's "evolutionary" thrust towards Wuzhu's teachings, and at the same time displays the synchronic range of virtuosity within which Wuzhu is presented as the fulcrum or fullest resolution.

Zhishen, as we recall, is said to have conveyed Huineng's robe from the court of

Empress Wu to a new destiny in Jiannan. Zhishen thus links the power of the new Southern School with the old prestige of the era of Hongren's heirs at Wu Zetian's court. In the *Lidai fabao ji* court scene his demonstration and verbal teaching of no-thought shows him to be superior any of the other disciples of Hongren, but his Dharma and that of his heir Chuji is still considered inferior to Wuxiang's and Wuzhu's.

Shenhui, whose influence was associated with the period of post-rebellion Tang restoration, is somewhere in between old and new as represented by the *Lidai fabao ji*. Through Shenhui's legend of Huineng, even Hongren, who had some degree of historicity, became a patriarchal icon. Shenhui enshrined the old in order to put it in service of the new. Shenhui's teaching of no-thought became the doctrinal patent of legitimacy, emptiness passed from mind to mind just as the robe passes from master to master but is never worn. And although he became the official seventh patriarch, his own Heze 荷澤 school lasted hardly longer than the Bao Tang.

Wuxiang was born a prince in Silla, a kingdom of Korea with tributary relations with the Tang. As a Chan master in Chengdu he was known for asceticism and magic, qualities which were part of the traditional image of a great master but also were given renewed force with the growing influence of Tantric Buddhism in the latter part of the eighth century. Wuzhu is shown to partake of Wuxiang's thaumaturgic qualities by his ability to survive without food and his ability to know what is going on at Wuxiang's temple many miles away. Without their actually being in contact, Wuxiang transfers both Huineng's robe that he received from Chuji and the Dharma of no-thought to Wuzhu.

Wuzhu is of low-ranking military origins, and in the course of his training travels from the north (associated with the old order) to the south (associated with the new). He is presented in extreme terms: he is isolated in the mountains, practices an asceticism more radical than Wuxiang's, and confers a transmission of no-thought more radically

formless than Shenhui's and Wuxiang's.

This "thinking in pairs" (or quartets) and resolution of oppositions is useful only insofar as it is also "no-thought" -- insofar as it is seen to not-abide in its own structure, not-rest in the prefiguring closure of its dialectic, and is seen as the mutual dependence of each term on its heuristically-deployed "other." It is an exercise of the paradox between the fundamentally differential/referential yet self-activating nature of the implied subject. In thus presenting these figures and their interactions, I attempt to apply intra-textually a point made intertextually by Faure:

> The differentiation produces a dissemination, a setting in motion of various paradigmatic pairs that can no longer be assigned to precise and unchanging sectarian positions. Once again, it is important to consider these various examples of "differential Chan" merely as ideal types and to avoid reifying the divisions into groups. Chan is, and always was, an "imagined community." The notions of *distinction* on the social level and of *differénce* on the philosophical level may help us to account for this constant production of gaps (*écarts*).[25]

On the social level of distinction, the *Lidai fabao ji* advances its claims for the ultimacy of the Bao Tang school by deploying both "old order" and "new order" topoi, and in doing so oscillates between the widest possible paradigmatic poles. In order to raise (or split) this social insecurity to the philosophical level of *differénce*, we must look to the originating *telos*, Wuzhu. As noted, the various orders of the text -- teleology, mediated oppositions, duplicity (recurrence of doubles and of fabrication), and hierarchies established through doctrinal polemics -- all converge in Wuzhu. The disparate sources, styles, and forces of the text center on this figure for whom few other

[25] Faure 1991: 31.

traces remain.[26] Jacques Derrida's comments provide a means to draw attention to the forces structuring the text and at the same time to draw attention to such attention-drawing:

> And as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire. The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which itself is beyond the reach of play. And on the basis of this certitude anxiety can be mastered, for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game, of being as it were at stake in the game from the outset.[27]

By implicating the *Lidai fabao ji* in such hyper-conceptualized play, my intention is neither to critique agendas on the social level nor to stage a resolution of tension on the philosophical level, but rather to point to textual strategies for the mastery of anxiety on both levels. Inescapably this entails recognition of the exercise itself as a strategy to address anxiety. In order to indicate the vanishing point (into absurdity) of these doubled anxieties, let me drive home the long-deferred but perfectly obvious point that Wuzhu 無住 means non-abiding, and thus serves well as the text's anxiety-mastering empty center:

> Henceforth, it became necessary to think both the law which somehow governed the desire for a center in the constitution of structure, and the process of signification which orders the displacements and substitutions for this law of central presence which has never been itself, has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute. The substitute does not substitute itself for anything which has somehow existed before it.

[26] Other mentions, such as made by the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Jingde chuandeng lu* have as their source the *Lidai fabao ji* itself. The sources for Zongmi's references to the Bao Tang are more problematic, but in any case he does not include biographical information about Wuzhu.

[27] Derrida 1978: 279.

> Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play.[28]

To borrow a phrase from the ever-pithy Wendy Doniger, Wuzhu becomes the "implied spider" who is to be seen everywhere and nowhere in the threads of transmission spun in the *Lidai fabao ji*.[29]

Mass Ordination and the Formless Precepts

Mass ordination ceremonies enjoyed a boom after the rebellion and continued to be a popular practice in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.[30] This is reflected in Chan texts of the period -- the *Platform Sūtra* is set in the context of an precepts assembly, and in the *Lidai fabao ji* the crucial meeting between Wuzhu and Wuxiang takes place at the time of a precepts retreat. The descriptions of precepts ceremony procedures found in Chan texts share features with the assemblies of confession and reception of the bodhisattva precepts discussed in Chapter Three. Eighth century manuals based on the apocryphal bodhisattva precepts texts included scripts of the responses and vows that the petitioner was to make when receiving the precepts. From Dunhuang colophons of texts dedicated on the occasion of receiving the precepts, we know that the preceptors would generally have lectured on a well-known scripture for the assembly.

In his article on ordination in the *Platform Sūtra*, Paul Groner compares the antecedents and format of Tiantai and Chan bodhisattva ordinations. Groner stresses the

[28] *Ibid.*, 280.

[29] Doniger 1997: 9.

[30] Weinstein 1987: 59-65.

comparative simplicity of the ordination ceremonies found in Shenhui's *Tanyu* and in the *Platform Sūtra*, and notes that the lack of any criteria to determine eligibility or to distinguish lay and monastic recipients is similar to the provisions for self-ordination found in the *Fanwang jing*. The influential *Fanwang jing*-based ordination manual of the Tiantai renovator and ninth patriarch Zhanran 湛然 (711-782) is instructive in this regard. It included "self-ordination" aspects such as taking the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as officiants of the ceremony, and the notion that taking the refuges caused arising of the essence of the precepts (*jieti* 戒體) in the participant.[31] Zhanran claimed "Although my manual does not follow (the ordination procedure of) any particular school, it does not differ from the Buddha's teachings."[32]

Thus, there was a trend towards interiorization and self-validation of the precepts in the Tiantai school as well as in the Chan school. However, in contrast to the Tiantai precepts manuals, in the Chan texts there is no mention of a preliminary period of purification and meditation and no sign from the Buddhas and bodhisattvas is required.[33] Chan would go much farther in opening the Dharma gates within, decoupling the link that had been previously maintained between inner and outer precepts. That "innate precepts" were necessarily linked to formal precepts had been a scriptural theme from the inception of the notion of the bodhisattva precepts, found in the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* and the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* as well as in apocrypha like the *Fanwang jing*.[34]

There are indications of the existence of a Chan ordination ceremony stemming from the East Mountain tradition. The non-extant *Pusa jiefa* 菩薩戒法 (Method for the Bodhisattva Precepts) attributed to Daoxin may have been the basis for the precepts

[31] Groner 1990b: 239.

[32] Groner, trans., *ibid.*, p. 244.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

[34] Groner 1990a: 268-272.

ceremony in both the Northern School *Dasheng wusheng fangbian men* 大乘無生方便門 (The Expedient Means of [Attaining] Birthlessness in the Mahāyāna)[35] and in the *Platform Sūtra*. The former requires the candidate to vow that he or she is able to uphold certain practices and Yanagida suggests that it may have been "intended to control an expanding order."[36]

The *Dasheng wusheng fabian men* opens with a precepts ceremony that scripts audience response:

> Next request the Buddhas of the ten directions to be your preceptors.
>
> Next request Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three periods of time [to be your witnesses (?)].
>
> Next I will ask about the five capabilities. First, can you reject all bad associates from now until the time of your enlightenment? *I can*.
>
> Second, can you become close to spiritual compatriots? *I can*.
>
> Third, can you maintain the precepts without transgression even in the face of death? *I can*.
>
> Fourth, can you read the Mahāyāna scriptures and inquire of their profound meaning? *I can*.
>
> Fifth, can you [strive] to the extent of your own power to save sentient beings from their suffering? *I can*.
>
> Next, each must say his own name and repent his transgressions, saying:
>
> *I now profoundly repent with all my heart all the karma of body, speech, and mind, and the ten evil transgressions [committed by me] during the past, future, and present. I hope that my transgressions will be eradicated, never to occur again. . . .*
>
> To maintain the Bodhisattva Precepts is to maintain the precepts of the mind, because the Buddha nature is the "nature of the precepts" (*chieh-hsing*). To activate the mind (*ch'i*) for the briefest instant is to go counter to the

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[35] S. 2503, P. 2058, P. 2270. On Japanese editions of the text, see McRae 1986: 327-330 n. 161. For a composite translation, see *ibid.*, pp. 171-196.

[36] Groner 1990b: 246.

Buddha-nature, to break the Bodhisattva Precepts. *(This [subject] is to be explained thrice.)*[37]

Of the many noteworthy points of this liturgy, the most germane here is that the traditional forms for taking the bodhisattva precepts are retained -- taking the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as preceptors, repeating the precepts, and uttering a formula of repentance -- along with ritualistically repeated explanations that the true nature of one's own mind is the same as the nature of the precepts. The two levels of truth of the precepts are thus maintained in the ordination ceremony itself.

Taking another step away from the conventional platform of the precepts, let us consider Shenhui's *Tanyu*. The setting of the address is clearly one of the ordination gatherings for which Shenhui was so famous. At the beginning of the *Tanyu* there is a collective ceremony of homage and confession of sins, which is too lengthy to include here.[38] The repentance of transgressions proceeds according to numerical groupings of the four, five, seven, and ten transgressions, which are not described. In fact, these groupings are all based on the essential lay precepts, and so their contents are largely redundant. The address itself stresses maintenance of conventional precepts:

> You must each maintain [mental and physical] abstinence. If you do not maintain this abstinence, you will ultimately never be able to generate all the good dharmas. If you are going to seek the insurpassable *bodhi* you must first maintain this abstinence, only after doing which will you gain entry [into *bodhi*]. If you do not maintain this abstinence, you won't even be able to get the body of a mangy fox [in your next life], so how could you possibly acquire the meritorious *dharmakāya* of a Tathāgata? . . . . You must depend on conditioned morality and conditioned wisdom to

[37] McRae 1986: 171-172.

[38] Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 226-228. McRae, trans., forthcoming (2B 4-5)

manifest the unconditioned [morality and unconditioned] wisdom.[39]

There is an unmistakable revival-tent quality to Shenhui's rhetoric, but his free handling of the scriptures also recalls the elegant twists of "contemplative analysis" seen in works attributed to the East Mountain school, particularly in the works of Shenxiu. John McRae has coined the term "contemplative analysis" to describe the ways in which orthodox scriptural doctrines were transfigured from transcendent abstractions into interiorized contemplative analogies. As noted, both Faure and McRae have shown that the distinction between "Northern" and "Southern" was not as clear as it has been represented to be, but in Shenhui's address the cool cloister breath of contemplation is indisputably quickened, if not evaporated: "Now that you have mounted this platform to cultivate the Prajñāpāramitā, friends, I want each of you in the depths of your minds to manifest the mind of incomparable bodhi, and, not leaving your seats, to awaken to the cardinal truth of the Middle Way."[40]

As in the *Tanyu*, the type of ceremony that is included in the *Platform Sūtra* was used to open general assemblies comprised of both lay and ordained. The *Platform Sūtra* begins by linking the Prajñāpāramitā and transmission of the formless precepts (*wuxiang jie* 無相戒): "The Master Hui-neng ascended the high seat at the lecture hall of the Ta-fan temple and expounded the Dharma of the Great Perfection of Wisdom, and transmitted the precepts of formlessness. At that time over ten thousand monks, nuns, and lay followers sat before him."[41] In the sermon that follows Huineng's story of his reception of the robe and Dharma, all of the elements of typical bodhisattva precepts ceremony are reinterpreted as formless: taking refuge in the three bodies of the Buddha

[39] Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 229. McRae, trans., forthcoming (2B 7).

[40] Hu Shih [1958] 1970: 232.

[41] Yampolsky 1967: 125.

(representing the three groups of pure precepts), the four vows, repentance, and taking refuge in the Triple Jewel.[42]

> Good friends, you must all with your own bodies receive the precepts of formlessness and recite in unison what I am about to say. It will make you see the threefold body of the Buddha in your own selves. 'I take refuge in the pure *Dharmakāya* Buddha in my own physical body. I take refuge in the ten thousand hundred billion *Nirmāṇakāya* Buddhas in my own physical body. I take refuge in the future perfect *Sambhogakāya* Buddha in my own physical body. (Recite the above three times).[43]

At the end of the ceremony, the nonduality of good and evil is emphasized: "The ten thousand things are all in self-nature. Although you see all men and non-men, evil and good, evil things and good things, you must not throw them aside, nor must you cling to them, nor must you be stained by them, but you must regard them as being like the empty sky."[44] Groner explicates this potentially antinomian teaching in terms of its continuity with the Northern School *Dasheng wusheng fabian men* and with interpretations of the precepts in found in canonical exegetical works and in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures:

> In a similar manner, in the ordination in the *Ta-sheng wu-sheng men*, the precepts of the mind (*hsin-chieh*) are conferred and the ceremony concludes with a discussion of meditation. The precepts thus seem to be similar to "precepts that arise with or accompany meditation" (*ting-kung chieh*). This concept, called *dhyānaja-saṃvara*, found in *abhidharma* sources such as the *Abhidharmakośa*, was based on the view that a person in deep trances associated with the form-realm would not violate any of the precepts associated with the desire-realm. However, when the practitioner emerged

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[42] See Yampolsky, trans., 1967: 141-146.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

> from the trance, he might then violate the precepts again. . . . In the *Platform Sūtra*, however, no static form of trance is advocated: rather, no-thought is established. When no-thought is present, then the precepts and wisdom are manifested. . . .
>
> In the *Platform Sūtra*, the explanation of *Mahaprajñāpāramitā* at the end of the ceremony corresponds to the explanation of the precepts found in other ceremonies. However, this explanation is unlike that found in most other manuals insofar as the non-substantiality of good and bad are stressed. If these basic concepts are non-substantial, then the precepts themselves are formless, that is, without characteristics. Such a concept is not new: according to the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, "The bodhisattva should fulfill the perfection of wisdom by basing himself on the non-existence of sin and good action."[45]

Though the notion of the formless precepts as the nature of one's own mind had scriptural basis as well as links with contemporary practices in the Tiantai and the Northern Schools, this does not seem to have diffused the sense of the ultra-radical that permeates the *Tanyu*, the *Platform Sūtra*, and the *Lidai fabao ji*. I would suggest that the atmosphere of the mass ordination assembly is the common context for the antinomianism in the explanation of the precepts that is found in all three texts. It was precisely within the well-defined time and space of such an assembly, in a ritual context, that the precepts of formlessness could be iterated. Even within this context, however, Shenhui was careful to stress the importance of conventional precepts. The uniqueness of the Bao Tang disciples is that they were willing to let the formless precepts go out of the bounds of public ritual and into the cloister, there to inform the practice of ordained monks and nuns.

As we recall, Wuzhu arrives at Wuxiang's place in the midst of a three-day ordination assembly. Wuxiang's exclusive message to Wuzhu to leave the monastery and go into

[45] Groner 1990b: 249.

the mountains is embedded within the all-inclusive public ceremony: "Every day in the midst of the assembly the Venerable Kim would intone in a loud voice, 'Why do you not go into the mountains? What benefit is there in lingering?'"[46] Wuzhu obeys and goes off to engage in practice that has none of the formal aspects of the monastery, for which he is criticized by other monks.

In the *Lidai fabao ji*, the first occurrence of a sermon of Wuzhu's is in the section following the one on Shenhui and preceding the long section on Wuzhu's early years, his wanderings, his meeting with Wuxiang, and his long-delayed confirmation as the keeper of the robe. This sermon is clearly meant to be envisioned in the context of a large assembly:

> The Venerable Wuzhu of the Bao Tang monastery during the Dali 大曆 era (766-779) in Chengdu Prefecture in Jiannan, would address students of the Way of the four assemblies [as follows]:
>
> "Whether a multitude or a single person, regardless of the occasion, if you have doubts you may confide your questions to me. I am occupying the seat and preaching the Dharma [so that you] directly see your own natures. Regard direct mind as the *bodhimaṇḍa* (*daochang* 道場). Regard aspiration to practice as the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Regard the profound mind as the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Regard the unstained as the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Regard not-grasping as the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Regard not-rejecting as the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Regard non-action as expedient means. Regard the vast [mind] as expedient means. Regard equanimity as expedient means. Regard separation from characteristics as the fire and regard liberation as the incense. Regard non-obstruction as repentance. Regard no-thought as the precepts, non-action and nothing to attain as meditation, and non-duality as wisdom. Do not regard the constructed ritual arena as the *bodhimaṇḍa*."[47]

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[46] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 186c6-7.

[47] *Ibid.*, *T*. 51 (2075) 185c26-186a5.

Wuzhu's sermon is not dissimilar in tone to Shenhui's in the *Tanyu* or Huineng's in the *Platform Sūtra*. Moreover, the focus on the *bodhimaṇḍa*, the sacred place of practice, is modeled after a section in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, from which the following is excerpted: "The mind that aspires to bodhi is the place of practice, for it is without error or misconception. Almsgiving is the place of practice, because it hopes for no reward. Observance of the precepts is the place of practice, because it brings fulfillment of the vows."[48] The *Vimalakīrti* passage deconstructs the notion of a specific place of practice by interpreting observance of the precepts and cultivation of the perfections as the *bodhimaṇḍa*. Elsewhere in the sūtra the meaning of practices such as almsgiving and observance of the precepts are themselves interpreted in terms of non-duality. Wuzhu's reinterpretation in terms of no-thought of the phenomenal aspects of Buddhist practice -- establishing a place of practice, taking refuge, offering incense, repentance, and practicing the precepts, meditation, and wisdom -- was thus a further step along an established path. Nevertheless, the injunction "Do not regard the constructed ritual arena as the *bodhimaṇḍa*" is a clear indication of the direction that the Bao Tang school would take. Although this sermon echoes the sermons given in the context of the mass ordination ceremonies of Shenhui and Wuxiang, the Bao Tang doctrinal stance precluded such Buddhist formalities as ordination ceremonies for the reception of the precepts. In the following section, I will discuss passages in the *Lidai fabao ji* that show the relationship between Bao Tang doctrine and practice.

## Antinomianism in the Monastery

Until the Bao Tang, no Chan school is on record as advocating abandonment of daily devotional routine and thereby ceasing to contribute to the circulation of merit. This

[48] *Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, Scripture on the Expositions of Vimalakīrti), *T.* 14 (475); Watson, trans., 1997: 54, see *ibid.*, pp. 54-56 for translation of the entire passage on the *bodhimaṇḍa*.

attitude presented a dilemma even within the context of the Southern School, for possession of the true transmission was a still a soteriological trust-fund. While the Bao Tang disciples may have pointedly rejected the six daily repetitions of the refuges and purifications, they certainly did not eschew repetition as a literary practice. Wuzhu's talks in the second half of the *Lidai fabao ji* revolve around the themes of formless practice and no-thought, and the same phrases are frequently recur within the series of structurally similar stories of Wuzhu's encounters with would-be challengers and followers.

Leading these encounters is the lengthy and dramatic narrative in which Wuzhu is invited down from the mountains by the imperial Lord Minister Du Hongjian 杜鴻漸 (709-769), the person of consequence alluded to in Wuxiang's prediction.[49] This story could be considered the centerpiece of the work. Du Hongjian was a powerful minister and devout Buddhist who was sent to Sichuan in 766 in order to put down an uprising by the cavalry officer Cui Gan 崔旰. By accusing Cui of cowardice Du was able to reduce his influence, but he remained a powerful figure in the area. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s make no mention of this situation, and they show Cui also taking refuge in Wuzhu. Du Hongjian is clearly the primary patron, however. His efforts to discover the true fate of the robe lead him at length to Wuzhu, and he invites Wuzhu and arranges a grand ceremonial procession for his descent from the mountains.

Wuzhu is accommodated in the Konghui 空惠 monastery when he arrives in Chengdu, and there Du Hongjian comes to see him for the first time.

> (The various officials of Du Hongjian's entourage) came first and told the Venerable [Wuzhu], "The Lord Minister [Du Hongjian] is coming to present himself to the Venerable."

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[49] See biographies of Du Hongjian in the *Jiu Tang shu* and *Xin Tang shu*, Zhonghua shuju ed., 1975: *JTS* pp. 3282-3283; *XTS* pp. 4422-4423. See also Yanagida 1976a: 197; Weinstein 1987: 79.

[Wuzhu] replied, "If he's coming it's up to him."

The Warrant Officer and the others told the Venerable, "The Minister of State is a very important person, you ought to go out and welcome him."

The Venerable said, "Not so. Welcoming is precisely human feelings. Not-welcoming is precisely the Buddha-Dharma."

The Warrant-Officer wanted to say more, but the Lord Minister entered the cloister and saw that the Venerable's demeanor was unmoving, manifesting awesome composure. The Lord Minister prostrated himself at the lowest step, made obeisance with palms joined, and politely inquired after [Wuzhu's] health and comfort. None of the Directors and Attendant-Censors had ever seen such a thing.[50]

As discussed in Chapter Two, Buddhist refusal to conform to secular protocol was a long-standing issue. The image of a monk declining to show respect to officials was common enough, but here we may note that the symbolic non-gesture has shifted from "not-bowing" to "not-rising."[51] Thus, a traditional hagiographical trope is employed as dramatic context for Wuzhu's teachings.

However, Buddhists had long claimed exemption on the basis of their observation of a higher protocol. Since the Bao Tang eschewed normative Buddhist practice it was no longer clear why they should be exempt from normative secular practice. It was certainly unclear why they should be supported by lay patrons, and it is the latter point that is taken up in several places in the *Lidai fabao ji*. The independent attitude of the Bao Tang followers does seem to have been more than symbolic, and the following passages stress acceptance of the consequences of independence.

In a scene from the period of his seclusion in the mountains, Wuzhu is deserted by his

[50] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 188c26-189a3.

[51] See Weinstein 1987: 49, for an example in which a monk's refusal to rise in the presence of the emperor is remarked upon.

fellow monks because his refusal to carry out any recognizably Buddhist activity besides sitting in meditation is, it is implied, responsible for the dearth of donations to their remote temple:

> Master Daoyi 道逸, [Wuzhu's] fellow inmate [at the mountain hermitage], practiced chanting, worship, and recitation of the Buddha's name, while the Venerable [Wuzhu] wholeheartedly cut through thinking and ceased all restless anxiety, and entered into the field of self-mandating [enlightenment].
>
> Daoyi, accompanied by all the minor masters who were their fellow-inmates, addressed the Venerable, saying, "I, together with all our fellow inmates, want you to join us in the daily six repetitions of the ritual of repentance. We humbly beg the Venerable to listen and accede."
>
> The Venerable said to Daoyi and the others, "Here we are altogether cut off from provisions, [which must be] transported on foot deep into the mountains. We cannot depend on legalistic practice. You want to learn to rave, but this is not the Buddha-Dharma at all." The Venerable quoted the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*, "'The raving mind is not at rest. At rest, it is bodhi (awakening). Peerless pure bright mind fundamentally pervades the Dharmadhātu.' No-thought is none other than seeing the Buddha. Thinking is none other than birth-and-death. If you want to practice worship and recitation, then leave the mountains. Below the mountains there are gracious and easeful temple-quarters, and you are free to go. If you want to stay with me, you must utterly devote yourself to no-thought. If you can, then you are free to stay. If you cannot, then you must go down from the mountains."[52]

Daoyi does leave the mountain to go down to the Jingzhong monastery and bear tales of Wuzhu to the Wuxiang. However, Wuxiang is delighted rather than dismayed by reports of Wuzhu's behavior, saying that he himself practiced thus in his youth: "When I

[52] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 186c28-187a8.

was at the stage of learning I wouldn't get around to eating, I just sat in empty idleness. I didn't even make an effort to shit or piss. You lot don't realize that when I was at Mt. Tiangu 天谷 I didn't worship or recite, either. All my fellow-students became angry with me and left the mountain. No one sent provisions and I had only "smelted earth" (*liantu* 練土) for food."[53] The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s thus present different criteria for refining the gold of the Saṅgha and distinguishing the "Dharma-Jewel" from the dust. The norms for valuable practice are inverted, and isolated irregulars who would have been the targets of periodic imperial attempts to sift out the Saṅgha are here validated.

In the following passages, Wuzhu defends the Bao Tang attitude towards the relationship between precepts and patronage to three different audiences: an eminent Chan master from the capital, a group of visiting Vinaya masters, and a group of lay supporters. The first passage features his exchange with the Chan master:

> [Chan Master] Tiwu 體無 knew that the Venerable [Wuzhu] was the Venerable Kim's disciple, but his words were malicious: "I wish to observe that the people of Jiannan do not arouse the [true] mind. The Chan Masters [hereabouts] hit people and call it not hitting, shout abuse at people and call it not shouting abuse, and when they receive donations they say 'not received.' I am deeply perplexed by these matters."[54]
>
> The Venerable said, "Practicing Prajñāpāramitā one does not see the one who is awarded favor and does not see the one who extends favor. There is already nothing that is received, the Buddha-Dharma is not yet complete, and there is also no end to receiving. From when I first put forth the mind up until the present I have not received a single hair in donations."
>
> When Tiwu heard this he looked at all the officials and said, "The

[53] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 187a16-19.

[54] Tiwu is unknown, but he is identified as a disciple of Hongzheng 弘正, who was a Northern School master. Yanagida 1976a: 229-230. Tiwu's comments reflect the growing reputation of Sichuan Chan, but the *Lidai fabao ji* does not display Wuzhu himself being abusive in the classic Chan manner, only from time to time when he is provoked.

Chan Master speaks with a big voice."

The Venerable asked Tiwu, "The acāryā (*duli* 闍梨) thus verbally acknowledges a Chan Master -- why arousing the mind hit people, arousing the mind abuse people, arousing the mind receive donations?"

Tiwu knew himself that he had lost doctrinal [ground.][55]

Wuzhu catches his opponent in this exchange by pointing out that the distinction between abusing people and receiving offerings from them only arises in the mind of duality. In the following passage Wuzhu preaches nonduality to a group of Vinaya Masters, who in the end joyfully accept his point of view:

> If one has views of upholding the precepts then this is a major violation of the precepts. Whether precepts or not precepts, the two are a single feature. One who is able to know this is a great master of the Way. See that the bhikṣus who commit grave offenses do not fall into Hell, and see that those who practice purity do not enter nirvāṇa. If you abide in views like these, this is impartial seeing. These days Vinaya masters preach about [sense] "contact" and preach about "purity," preach about "upholding" and preach about "violating." They make forms (*zuo xiang* 作相) for receiving the precepts, they make forms for decorum, and even for eating food everything is made into forms.[56]

He criticizes the Vinaya masters for their intent focus on trivial matters, and later compares them to cats stalking mice, taking mincing steps in order to win a reputation for purity. Though Wuzhu does extend the ramifications of his metaphor, monks who had a reputation for rectitude were in fact those most likely to be well-supported, enabled to continue consuming the rewards of their restraint with proper restraint.

Wuzhu preaches to lay supporters in the following manner:

[55] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 190b24-190c4.

[56] *Ibid.*, *T*. 51 (2075) 194b13-17.

> One does not make either profit or loss, there is no great good fortune and no small good fortune. With nothing that is given, one gives all that is received. The Buddha-Dharma is not yet complete and there is no end to receiving. 'If you want to confess and repent, sit properly and think on the characteristic of reality.'[57] No-thought is precisely the characteristic of reality, thought is precisely void delusion. Confessing and repenting and intoning prayers, all this is void delusion.
>
> Another time the Venerable preached: "'Who is rewarded by the Buddha's favor? One who practices according to the Dharma. Who is worthy to receive offerings? The one who is not involved in worldly affairs. Who consumes the offerings? One who is non-grasping in the Dharma.'"[58]

Even though Wuzhu interprets precepts and patronage in terms of no-thought in all three cases, occasionally even using the same phrases, still there are differences in style and content to fit the audience. With the Chan master he engages in Dharma-debate, with the Vinaya masters he speaks of the emptiness of the notions of Hell and nirvāṇa, and with the lay people he preaches against dependence on notions of good fortune, repentance and prayers. However, he gives the lay people a modicum of formal advice when he says "Sit properly and think on the characteristic of reality," which is a phrase from a contemplation scripture, the kind of scripture that he criticizes in other contexts. He quotes from a scripture popular in Chan circles, the *Viśeṣacintibrahmaparipṛcchā-sūtra*, in order to make claims for the rights of those who are detached from the world to be supported by the laity.[59]

[57] This phrase is from the *Guan Puxianpusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經 (Scripture of the Methods of Contemplation of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra), *T.* 9 (277), also quoted in the *Lengqie shizi ji*. See Yanagida 1971: 192.

[58] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 195b26-195c2.

[59] This quotation will be discussed at greater length below.

As noted previously, Zongmi 宗密 (780-841) confirmed and deplored that the Bao Tang manner of practicing and receiving offerings was unconventional. The following passage is from his *Yuanjue jing dashu chao* 圓覺經大疏鈔 (Subcommentary to the Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment), in which he describes Bao Tang doctrine and practice:

> While the doctrine that he taught was generally similar, [Wu-chu's] transmission ceremony was completely different from that of Kim [i.e., Wu-hsiang]. The difference is that [Wu-chu] does not follow any of the observances of the Buddhist tradition. As soon as the [disciple's] head is shaved, he simply dons the seven-fold robe, without receiving the prohibitory precepts. Worship and repentance, reading [of scripture], painting of Buddhist images, and copying of sutras are all rejected as deluded ideas (*wang-hsiang* 妄想), and no Buddhist services are given in the cloister where [the monks] live. Therefore, it is said [in the *Yüan chüeh ching ta shu* that Wu-chu's Chan] does not adhere to either teaching or practice (*chiao-hsing pu-chü* 教行不拘). . . .
>
> The expression 'extinguishing consciousness' (*mieh-shih* 滅識) [used in reference to Wu-chu's school in the *Yüan chüeh ching ta shu*] refers to the way [that school] cultivates. Their idea is that the cycle of birth and death is due to the arising of thought (*ch'i-hsin* 起心): when thought arises there is delusion (*wang* 妄); when no thought, either good or evil, arises there is truth. Moreover, they do not rely on the practices of religious observances (*shih-hsiang* 事相). They consider discrimination the adversary; and non-discrimination (*wu-fen-pieh* 無分別), the profound way (*miao-tao* 妙道). . . . Their rejection of all doctrines (*chiao-hsiang* 教相) is intended to put an end to discrimination and bring about the realization of truth. Therefore, in their living quarters, they make no arrangements for food or clothing, but rely on others' offerings. If something is offered, they have clothes and food; if not, they accept cold and hunger. They neither seek donations nor beg for food. If someone enters their cloister, they neither rise nor go to greet him, regardless of his status. They accept whatever praise or blame, support or harm may come from others. This is

based on their teaching of non-discrimination. Thus their practice is not concerned with right or wrong, but only values no-mind (*wu-hsin* 無心) as the profound ultimate (*miao-chi* 妙極). Hence, it is said to be the 'extinguishing of consciousness.'[60]

The term *mieshi*, "extinguishing consciousness" was Zongmi's way of expressing the problem with the Bao Tang interpretation of Shenhui's *wunian* 無念, no-thought. For Zongmi, Bao Tang antinomianism was of a piece with the naturalism and spontaneity advocated by another Sichuan Chan school, the Hongzhou 洪州 line of Mazu 馬祖 (709-788). Zongmi considered that the "sudden enlightenment" (*dunwu* 頓悟) experience of direct perception of one's own true nature is the basis of subsequent "gradual cultivation" (*jianxiu* 漸修) and integration of insight. He claimed that the Hongzhou followers' emphasis on all activity as the expression of true nature did not accommodate the necessarily transformative aspects of direct experience and gradual cultivation. Peter Gregory characterizes his views as follows: "This means, for Tsung-mi, that followers of the Hung-chou line have no clear assurance that their insight is true and, accordingly, their practice of 'simply allowing the mind to act spontaneously' can become a rationalization for deluded activity."[61]

Gregory suggests that Zongmi's knowledge of actual Bao Tang practices heightened his awareness of the potential for antinomianism inherent in Southern School Chan doctrines and even, perhaps, in Huayan doctrines: "The Hua-yen teaching of *shih-shih wu ai* 事事無礙 thus refers to the intricate web of interconnections that obtain among phenomenal appearances. They are that which -- in the context of his criticism of the

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[60] *Yuanjue jing dashu chao*, ZZ. vol. 14: 278d; Bielefeldt, trans., in Yanagida 1983a: 31-33. I added a few characters into the translation which were not in the original because they had occurred previously in the article, and I combined two sections of translation that were separated in the article. See also Gregory 1991: 244-252.

[61] Gregory 1991: 247.

Hung-chou line of Ch'an -- he refers to the functioning-in-accord-with-conditions, merely the ever-changing images reflected on the surface of the mind, nothing more than the epiphenomena (*mo* 末) of the intrinsically enlightened true mind."[62]

However, I would suggest that Bao Tang practice was perhaps closer to a sudden enlightenment-gradual cultivation model than Zongmi would allow, and as suspicious of reifying mere function as he was. Wuzhu's "just sitting in empty idleness" (*zhi kongxian zuo* 只空閑坐) is not spontaneous function, it is in fact, in the earthy words put into Wuxiang's mouth, forgetting even to eat and shit and piss. The incantations of *wunian* repeated over and over again throughout Wuzhu's Dharma-talks are like dhāraṇī of direct sudden experience. The difference is that for the Bao Tang the form of gradual cultivation was anti-formalism, which Zongmi is perhaps justified in seeing as nihilistic, a negative attachment to form. However, as attested by Zongmi's own words, their inversion of institutional norms did not promote carefree spontaneity but rather the hard training of relinquishing expectations and becoming inured to the fluctuations of abundance and privation.

Women in the *Lidai fabao ji*

Bao Tang anti-institutionalism may be said to have had its positive aspects as well -- especially from the point of view of those who would otherwise have been at the bottom of the four-fold assembly, namely female lay practitioners. Dispensing with the ritual and institutional forms that maintained a clear distinction between lay and ordained, the Bao Tang school seems to have also blurred the line between female lay practitioners and nuns, as well as the line between female and male disciples.

In this regard, we might return to Wuzhu's sermon-from-afar to the Jingzhong monks. As we recall, he used a scriptural anecdote in order to illustrate his point that mind-to-

[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

mind identity in Buddha-nature preempts the issue of who is first and last to see the Buddha. The following is the passage that was synopsized above:

> At that time [when the Buddha was about to descend to Jambudvīpa after preaching to his mother in Trāyastriṃśa Heaven], the bhikṣuṇī Utpalavarṇā (Lianhuase 蓮華色), being determined to expunge the evil reputation [of her sex], desired to be the first to greet the Buddha. All the kings of great kingdoms and the eight classes of dragons and divinities had completely encircled [the place where the Buddha was expected] in circumambulations, and there was no path through. She transformed herself into a Great Cakravartin King surrounded by his thousand sons, and the dragons, divinities and kings opened a path [for her/them]. Utpalavarṇā Bhikṣuṇī then returned to her original body, and when she had circumambulated the World-Honored One, she joined her palms and spoke a gāthā: "I am the first to greet the Buddha, I am the first to make obeisance to the Buddha." Having spoken the gāthā, she made obeisance and stood up. At that, the World-Honored One told the bhikṣuṇī, "In this company, you are the last." The bhikṣuṇī addressed the World-Honored One, saying, "In this company there are no arhats, why do you say I am last?" The World-Honored One told the bhikṣuṇī, "Subhuti is continuously in samādhi in a stone cell, and so he is able to see my Dharma-body. You came rushing to see my form-body, and so you are last."[63]

In the version recorded by Faxian 法顯, it is simply stated that she used her powers to transform into a Cakravartin and was the first to greet the Buddha.[64] Nancy Falk

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[63] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 186c18-28. This episode is found in several sources likely to have been known by the *Lidai fabao ji* author/s, including the *Dazhi du lun*, *T.* 25 (1509) 137a, which is very close to the *Lidai fabao ji* version. See Lamotte, trans., 1944-1980, vol. 2: 634-636. There is also a brief account in the *Da Tang xiyu ji*, *T.* 51 (2087) 893b.

[64] *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳 (Biography of the Eminent Monk Faxian), a.k.a. *Foguo ji* 佛國記 (Record of Buddhist Kingdoms), *T.* 51 (2085) 859c12-15. Beal, trans., [1884] 1981: xl; Giles, trans., 1923: 24-25. Both the Beal and Giles translations state that the Buddha used *his* powers to change her into a Cakravartin and then placed her so that she could see him first. However, the Chinese clearly says that she used her own spiritual powers to transform and place herself.

comments upon this in the context of a discussion of the gradual increase of misogynist elements in Buddhist literature, which may be seen in the coexistence of both positive and negative versions of the same story.[65] However, one might also see the negative version included in the *Lidai fabao ji* as scriptural precedent for a different message: a woman does not have to change herself into a Cakravartin and his thousand sons in order to see the Buddha. Sitting in samādhi, "the evil reputation of her sex"[66] and her place in the assembly are non-issues. This also reflects traditional Buddhist valorization of the realization of no-self through depreciation of supra-normal powers, a depreciation which became prominent in Chan rhetoric as well.[67]

Two of the best-known Mahāyāna scriptural precedents that feature the power of transformation of gender are found in the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*. In the *Lotus Sūtra* passage, the dragon king's daughter's ability to achieve enlightenment in spite of her sex and youth proves the efficacy of the Buddha-vehicle promoted by the *Lotus*. However, she has to turn into a male in order to teach as a Buddha.[68] In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra* on the other hand, the Buddha's disciple Śāriputra is changed into a woman by a goddess who is trying to teach him about non-duality.* Although he is unable to change back into a man and must rely on her powers before he is restored to "himself" he remains resistant to her lesson. He asks her when she will attain full enlightenment, and she replies that she will do so when Śāriputra returns to the state of an ordinary unenlightened man. Śāriputra replies that it is unthinkable that an arhat like

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[65] Falk 1980: 219.

[66] The phrase *wuming* 惡名 could also refer to her name, which in Chinese would have ambiguous connotations for a nun. In the name Lianhuase 蓮華色, literally "the color of the Lotus," the character for color, *se* 色, is also used for the "form body" (*se shen* 色身) of the Buddha that she rushes to see, and it also means sexual passion.

[67] See Faure 1991: 96-131 for an history of the role of powers in Chan discourse.

[68] *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*), *T.* 9 (262) 35c; Watson, trans., 1993: 187-189. For an insightful discussion of the use of this passage in Chan literature, see Levering 1982: 22-27.

himself could return to the state of an ordinary man. She says, precisely, attaining full enlightenment is unthinkable, for there is nothing to be attained.[69]

In both these scriptural passages the issue of gender is in service of larger didactic points, albeit ambivalent ones -- in the first, even a little dragon girl can turn into a complete but therefore male Buddha, and in the second a goddess turns a man into a woman in order to help him overcome the dualistic notions that keep him from complete enlightenment. Both are gems of Mahāyāna literature, but they do not really address the problems that beset human female Buddhist practitioners.

It is beyond the scope of this study develop a history of women in Buddhism, and I refer the interested reader to selected works on the topic.[70] However, I will attempt a brief sketch by way of background for the passages on women in the *Lidai fabao ji*.

The paradigmatic first Buddhist nun is of course the Buddha's aunt and foster mother, Mahāprajāpatī Gotamī, discussed in the previous chapter. One might say that the Buddha himself contributed to create the conditions that led her to persist in her efforts to establish an order of nuns in the face of his opposition. Her elder male clan members including her husband had died, but the son and nephews that she might have relied on instead had followed the Buddha into homelessness. Many of her followers were also female members of Buddha's former household or the former wives of men who had become Buddhist monks.

As is well-known, the Buddha several times refused Ānanda's pleading on behalf of the nuns, but he finally allowed the order to be formed. However, he stipulated eight special rules that would subordinate the nuns to the monks and even male novices, and this in turn led to a significantly larger number of rules in the prātimokṣa required for a

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[69] *Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 ( *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, Scripture on the Expositions of Vimalakīrti), *T.* 14 (475); Watson, trans., 1997: 90-92.

[70] See Horner [1930] 1975; Paul [1974] 1980, & 1979; Falk & Gross, eds., 1980; Levering 1982 & 1992; Murcott 1991; Cabezón, ed., 1992; Gross 1993; Tsai, trans., 1994.

nun's ordination. These special rules maintained an institutional and ritual imbalance between the two Saṅghas. Monks could instruct nuns, but not the other way around. An assembly of monks could ordain further monks, but a nun's ordination required both senior nuns and monks. As related in the sixth century *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (Biographies of Nuns), this created difficulties for the first Chinese female aspirants to ordination, for there were no senior Indian nuns in China:

> The foreign Buddhist monk T'an-mo-chieh-to set up a ceremonial dais [on which Ching-chien and her disciples were to accept all of the monastic rules for women as found in the newly translated text]. The Chinese monk Shih Tao-ch'ang objected to this action, however, on the basis of scriptures on the origins of the monastic rules that said that, because there was no Assembly of Nuns in China to bestow the rules on the women as the scriptures required, the ritual should not be carried out. His objections were not acknowledged and, as a result, [Shih Tao-ch'ang] took a boat down the Ssu River to the south. Ching-chien and the others, four altogether, became Buddhist nuns by accepting, from the Assembly of Monks only, the obligation to observe all the monastic rules. Ching-chien is thus the first of the Buddhist nuns in China.[71]

While the presence of women within the Saṅgha was a source of tension and ambivalence, much of the Saṅgha's day-to-day existence was owing to the support of pious laywomen. In early Buddhist literature, the paradigmatic laywoman Viṣaka is more lavishly praised than the nuns, and she is allowed a freedom to associate with the Buddha and senior monks that the nuns are not.[72] Lay devotional practice and support of the Saṅgha was seen as the proper sphere of women's practice, a distinction related to the

[71] *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (Biographies of Nuns), *T.* 50 (2063); Tsai, trans., 1994: 19. The two main characters are Tanmojieduo 曇摩羯多, Dharmagupta -- identification unclear, perhaps the same as Tanmojueduo 曇摩崛多 known to have been active in the Later Qin 後秦 (384-417), and the nun Zhu Jingjian 竺淨檢, *ca.* 292- *ca.* 361.

[72] See Horner [1930] 1975: 345-361.

brahmanical meaning of Dharma in terms of the individual's social role. Women who renounce householder life transgress against Dharma, but males do not. As Nancy Falk has argued, the pertinent questions are not be why the nun's order was so restricted and why it declined earlier than the monk's order in India, but why it was established and survived as long as it did, given the strength of the cultural norms it was resisting.[73]

In China, Confucian cultural norms were inimical to male renunciation of family life, let alone female. Nevertheless, in China too the nun's order flourished in spite of resistance and relative poverty compared to the monk's order, and in China too pious laywomen were regarded with less ambivalence than nuns. Miriam Levering has written two articles that highlight the different issues that surrounded the enlightenment of a laywoman and a nun. In "Lin-chi (Rinzai) Ch'an and Gender: The Rhetoric of Equality and the Rhetoric of Heroism," she analyzes the way that epithets of masculine heroism were used to praise the enlightenment of a female Chan lay practitioner in the Song, a topic to which we will return.[74]

In "The Dragon Girl and the Abbess of Mo-shan: Gender and Status in the Ch'an Buddhist Tradition," Levering discusses the rare if not singular example of Liaoran 了然, abbess of Moshan 末山, who subdued the monk Zhixian 志閑 in Dharma-combat: "Chih-hsien said, 'What is the occupant of Mo-shan like?' Liao-jan replied: 'She has neither male nor female form (*hsiang*).' Chih-hsien shouted, 'Why doesn't she transform herself?' Liao-jan replied, 'She is not a spirit, not a ghost. What would you have her become?'"[75] After this encounter, Zhixian remained as gardener in the nunnery for three years, and later acknowledged her to have given him a "half-ladle" which, when

[73] Falk 1980: 220-223.

[74] Levering 1992: 137-156.

[75] *Jingde chuandeng lu*, *T.* 51 (2076) 289a7-9, from the record of Liaoran, *ibid.*, p. 289a1-13; Levering, trans., 1982: 27-28.

combined with the other half-ladle provided by Linji 臨濟 (d. 866), satisfied his hunger.[76] Both of Levering's articles are based on material that is hagiographical but that nevertheless gives us fascinating glimpses of individual female Chan practitioners in the late Tang and Song dynasties.

The *Lidai fabao ji* provides us with a brief but significant glimpse of the experience of individual women practitioners in an earlier period of Chan. Given the Bao Tang penchant for ostentatiously inverting norms, we may suspect that the inclusion of women fulfills a familiar didactic and symbolic function, as in the scriptures and also in later Chan *gongan* literature. Be that as it may, the lessons that are conveyed are interesting in their own right.

One such lesson is that it is more acceptable to bring your dependents to the monastery than to abandon them. This is a further extension of ramifications of the Southern School Chan that had already been voiced in the *Platform Sūtra*. In the context of the doctrine of realizing one's own Buddha nature "all at once," without delay and without mediation, the privilege of delay and mediation afforded by a well-supported monastery was theoretically unnecessary: "Good friends, if you wish to practice, it is all right to do so as laymen; you don't have to be in a temple."[77]

In the *Lidai fabao ji*, Wuzhu sharply criticizes a group of old laymen for wanting to leave their families and become Wuzhu's disciples:

> There were some old men who told the Venerable, "All of us, your disciples, have wives and children, males and females (i.e. young dependents) and households. We wish to give them up entirely and submit to the Venerable and study the Way."
>
> The Venerable said, "The Way does not have any particular form that

[76] Levering 1982: 28.

[77] *Platform Sūtra*, Yampolsy, trans., 1967: 159.

can be cultivated, the Dharma does not have any particular form that can be validated. Just unrestricted non-recollection and no-thought, at all times everything is the Way." He asked the old men, "Do you get it?" The old men were silent and did not answer, because they didn't understand. The Venerable preached a gāthā: "Your wife is an earless manacle, your young are rattling shackles. You are a worthless slave, you have reached old age and are not able to escape."[78]

Wuzhu throws the laymen's own thinking back in their faces, mocking their fettered state to show them that they are bound by ignorance and not by family life. In contrast, a monk who was apparently one of Wuzhu's earliest and closest followers brings his mother with him into the cloister:

> There was also Master Fayuan 法緣 of Longzhou 隴州, who had had the secular name Cao 曹. He heard of the Venerable from afar and, bringing his mother along with him, arrived at the Baiyai Mountains[79] and made obeisance to the Venerable. (There follows an account of their dialogue, in which Wuzhu shows him that his previous reliance on commentaries rather than the sūtras themselves has misled him, and he concludes with one of his paeans to no-thought.)
>
> "The *Sūtra* says, 'Separation from all characteristics is precisely called the Buddhas.' 'If one sees 'I' through forms and seeks 'I' through sounds, this is a person practicing the false way, unable to see the Tathāgata.'[80] The words of this scripture are precisely this mind. See the nature and attain the Way of the Buddha. No-thought is precisely seeing the nature,

[78] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 193a20-26.

[79] This is the only mention of a disciple who joined him while he was still in the mountains, from 759-766.

[80] "The *Sūtra*" is the *Diamond Sūtra*, *Jin'gang[banruopoluomi]jing* 金剛[般若波羅蜜]經 (*Vajracchedikā-sūtra*). The five major translations in the *Taishō* are: *T*. 8 (235) by Kumārajīva; T. 8 (236) by Bodhiruci; *T*. 8 (237) by Paramārtha 真諦; *T*. 8 (238) by Dharmagupta 曇摩笈多; and *T*. 8 (239) by Yijing 義淨. Kumārajīva's translation was the most widely used, and after Shenhui the sūtra became a mainstay of Southern School discourse and was widely quoted in Chan texts. The same phrases are quoted several times in the *Lidai fabao ji*.

no-thought [is] no-defilements. No-thought is precisely no-self, no-thought is precisely no-other. No-thought is precisely no-Buddha, no-thought is precisely no-beings. At the time of true no-thought, no-thought itself is not."

When Master Fayuan heard this, he joined his palms and said to the Venerable, "I am exceedingly joyful that I have been able to meet the Venerable. Fayuan and his aged relative (i.e. my mother and I) humbly beg your compassion and aid." And so [they] stayed in the mountains and never left Wuzhu's side.[81]

This issue of the nonduality of leaving or bringing aside, there are several brief but striking inclusions of women in the *Lidai fabao ji* version of Chan history. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the *Lidai fabao ji* is the source for the provocative and ambivalent phrase attributed to Bodhidharma in which the first patriarch names a nun as one of his disciples: "The one who has got my marrow is Huike, the one who has got my bones is Daoyu 道育, and the one who has got my flesh is the nun Zongchi 總持."[82] Discussed at some length in the same chapter, Empress Wu Zetian has a decisive role in the *Lidai fabao ji* saga of the patriarchy, and she is portrayed in a much more sympathetic manner than usual.

In the biography of Wuxiang it is said that his sister's example motivated him to become a monk, a story found only in the *Lidai fabao ji*:

Chan Master Wuxiang of the Jingzhong Monastery in Chengdu Superior Prefecture in Jiannan had the lay surname Kim, and was of the clan of Silla princes, a family [prominent] for generations East-of-the-Sea (i.e. Korea).

Formerly when he was in his homeland he had a younger sister. When

[81] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 195b3-22. For a discussion of mothers in Chan literature, see Faure 1991: 245-246.

[82] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 181a7-8.

she first heard that she had been promised away in marriage, she picked up a knife[83] and slashed her face, vowing her determination to "return to the true."[84] The Venerable [Wuxiang] saw this and cried, "A girl is pliant and weak, yet you know the meaning of constancy and chastity. A fine fellow is hard and strong -- yet how can I be so lacking in spirit?" He thereupon took the tonsure and left his family, and sailed across the sea to the west, arriving in the country of the Tang (i.e. China).[85]

Finally, there is the passage on the female disciples of Wuzhu, which I will quote in full:

> The wife and daughter of Administrator Mu Rong 慕容 of Qingzhou 慶州 were determined to seek the Mahāyāna.[86] Accompanied by the entire family, young and old, they came to pay obeisance to the Venerable [Wuzhu].
>
> The Venerable asked the wife, "Where did you come from?"
>
> She replied, "Your disciple heard from afar that the Venerable had great compassion, so we came to pay obeisance."
>
> The Venerable then preached various essentials of the Dharma for them. When the daughter had heard him preach, she knelt with her palms joined and said to the Venerable, "Your disciple is a woman with the three obstructions and five vagaries,[87] and a body that is not free (*zizai* 自在). That is why I have come now to submit to the Venerable, I am determined to cut off the source of birth and death. I humbly beg the Venerable to point out the essentials of the Dharma."

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[83] Yanagida surmises that *shou dao* 授刀 in P. 2125 should be changed to *jiang dao* 將刀, as translated here. Yanagida 1976a: 150.

[84] *Guizhen* 歸貞: To attain awakening, or to die.

[85] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T*. 51 (2075) 184c17-21.

[86] The Administrator may be the same as the Mu Rongding 慕容鼎 who was one of the officials who welcomed Wuzhu when he came out of the mountains. See *ibid.*, *T*. 51 (2075) 188b21-22.

[87] *Sanzhang wuza* 三障五雜. The phrasing is unusual, but presumably this refers to the three obstructions of greed, anger and ignorance and the traditional five obstacles specific to women, who cannot be reborn as a Mahābrahman, Indra, Māra, a Cakravartin, or a Buddha.

The Venerable said, "If you are capable of such [resolution], then you are a great hero male-child (*dazhangfu er* 大丈夫兒), why are you 'a woman'?" The Venerable preached the essentials of the Dharma for her: "No-thought is precisely no 'male,' no-thought is precisely no 'female.' No-thought is precisely no-obstruction, no-thought is precisely no-hindrance. No-thought is precisely no-birth, no-thought is precisely no-death. At the time of true no-thought, no-thought itself is not. This is none other than cutting off the source of birth and death."

When the daughter heard him preach, her eyes did not blink and she stood absolutely still. In an instant, the Venerable knew that this woman had a resolute mind. He gave her the Dharma name Changjingjin 常精進, and her mother was named Zhengbianzhi 正遍知. They took the tonsure and practiced, and became leaders among nuns.

Later, [their example] drew a young female relative with the surname Wei 韋, who was the grand-daughter of Grand Councillor Su 蘇. She was quick-witted and clever, extensively learned and knowledgeable, and when asked a question she was never without an answer. She came to pay obeisance to the Venerable. The Venerable saw that she was obdurate and determined on chastity (*zhicao* 志操),[88] and he preached the Dharma for her:

"This Dharma is not caused and conditioned, it has neither false nor not false, it is without true and false. Separated from all characteristics is precisely all Dharmas. The Dharma is beyond eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and the Dharma is separate from all contemplation practices. No-thought is precisely no-practice, no-thought is precisely no-contemplation. No-thought is precisely no-body, no-thought is precisely no-mind. No-thought is precisely no-valuable, no-thought is precisely no-worthless. No-thought is precisely no-high, no-thought is precisely no-low. At the time of true no-thought, no-thought itself is not."

When the woman heard his preaching, she joined her palms together and told the Venerable, "Your disciple is a woman whose obstructions

[88] A similar term is applied to Wuxiang's sister, *yacao* 雅操. This term is not applied to the other male disciples of Wuzhu, but it does occur in praise of Chuji, where it follows his other virtues of not eating meat or pungent foods. See *ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 184b19.

from transgressions are very weighty, but now that I have heard the Dharma, stain and obstruction are extirpated." So saying she wept grievously, a rain of tears. She then requested a Dharma name, and she was named Liaojianxing 了見性. When she had been named, she tonsured herself and donned robes (*zi luofa piyi* 自落髮披衣), and became a leader among nuns.

"Who is rewarded by the Buddha's favor? One who practices according to the Dharma. Who consumes offerings? One who is not involved in worldly affairs. Who is worthy of offerings? In the Dharma there is nothing that is taken." If one is able to practice in this way, of oneself one has offerings from Heaven's kitchen.[89]

The quotation that immediately follows the account of Liaojianxing is a favorite one in the *Lidai fabao ji*, occurring first in the collection of sūtra quotations following the passage on Daoan, and again in the sermon to the laymen quoted above.[90] Here the quotation leads a collection of miscellanea, sometime identified as parts of Wuzhu's sayings, and sometimes, as in this case, not. I believe that the placement of this particular quotation is not random, it is expressive of the issue at hand: Is a self-tonsured nun who practices no-thought less worthy of offerings than a formally ordained monk who practices recitation of scriptures and a daily schedule of devotions? Or is she indeed more worthy?

Praise of the worthiness of these women, especially Liaojianxing, is far more lavish, specific, and multi-faceted than anything said of the male disciples in the *Lidai fabao ji*. Is this condescension, or does it reflect extraordinary circumstances? In her analysis of the "rhetoric of heroism," Miriam Levering hears a note of insincerity in the fulsome

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[89] *Ibid.*, *T*. 51 (2075) 192a24-b20.

[90] In each case the quotation is slightly different, compare 183a8-10, 192b18-20 and 195b29-c2. It is a pastiche culled from different parts of the *Siyifantian suowen jing* 思益梵天所問經 (*Viśeṣacintibrahmaparipṛcchā-sūtra*), *T*. 14 (586). For identification of the various parts, see Yanagida 1976a: 119.

praise that the Chan Master Dahui heaps upon his female lay devotee Lady Qin'guo. Levering focuses on Dahui's use of the same term Wuzhu uses, *dazhangfu* 大丈夫, but Wuzhu adds to this an *er* 兒, "male child," a diminutive that is perhaps just the kind of "pat on the head" that Levering discusses. In her conclusions, Levering argues: "The rhetoric of equality cannot stand up against the rhetoric of masculine heroism, when the latter is supported by gender distinctions so 'real' to the culture and remain unambiguous. In this sermon Ta-hui says, 'You see her as a woman, but she is a *ta-chang-fu*, a great hero.' This is as unambiguous a statement of equality as this rhetoric can yield. But it is not so different from the formulation several times repeated elsewhere in Ta-hui's records, 'Even though you are a woman, you have the will of a *ta-chang-fu*,' a formulation that shows the androcentric character of Chinese Buddhism in general and of Ch'an in particular."[91]

In Chan in general and in the Bao Tang school in particular, inversion of norms became normative. The rhetoric of male heroism applied to women exemplifies the non-dual, and the pointedness of the application reinforces the duality. Just as the power of the tumultuous Chan encounter dialogues depends on the bland regularities of monastic life, so too the force of the image of a female *dazhangfu* depends on androcentrism. Yet the centrisms of one's own milieu are so pervasive that they are no-center, and only from some contingently established place "outside" may one indulge in distinguishing shifts of balance. What if a woman applies the term *dazhangfu* to herself? What if the rhetoric is so empty that it becomes reality, like the "painted dragon bringing rain?"

There is more specific information given about Changjingjin's and Liaojianxing's family backgrounds than for any other disciples. Their accounts are also the most personal and emotional -- a few of the male disciples weep when receiving the Dharma,

[91] Levering 1992: 151.

but none are sketched as personalities in the same manner. Changjingjin and Liaojianxing emerge in fact as the *dazhangfu* among Wuzhu's followers, and perhaps as the *er* among his followers, his "sons."

In light of this passage and the subtle but pervasive inclusion of women in the *Lidai fabao ji* history of Chan, I will make a suggestion that may be transferential and is impossible to prove, but is nevertheless worth considering: what if Changjingjin and Liaojianxing wrote the *Lidai fabao ji*, or had a hand in writing it? If true, this would do something to explain the anonymity of the work in a period and genre in which such total anonymity was not the norm. Everywhere else in the *Lidai fabao ji* literary and intellectual skills are devalued, but here they are advanced in a manner that may betray an element of anxious self-justification.

I myself waver between the probability that these really are painted dragons and the possibility that their tears are wet, their eyes unblinking as they gaze at an image of Wuzhu that they created. Considering this possibility, one might imagine the particular interest that Wuzhu's antinomianism would have for female Buddhist practitioners. This is the only passage in which self-tonsuring is specifically mentioned: Liaojianxing cuts her own hair and dons robes and becomes a nun immediately, a new kind of subitism. This is one logical conclusion of the sudden teaching: that any *dazhangfu* may be ordained at her own desire.

## CHAPTER SIX: WUZHU'S LEGACY

This study of the *Lidai fabao ji* is drawing to a close, it remains but to hear of Wuzhu's death, and to ask about the fate of his robe and his Dharma. In this chapter we will look at the portrait of Wuzhu as the Bao Tang disciples wished him to be remembered. Then I will allude to several aspects of his legacy and the traces of the Bao Tang School in the early ninth century, and offer some brief concluding reflections.

### The Eulogy for Wuzhu's Portrait

The *Lidai fabao ji* ends with a remarkable eulogy to a portrait of Wuzhu that the Bao Tang disciples had painted soon after his death. The final section of the *Lidai fabao ji* is set off as a separate section by these words: "Biography of the Venerable of the Bao Tang Monastery in the Dali era. A Portrait Eulogy, with Preface, by the Disciples of the Chan Gate of Sudden Awakening in the Mahāyāna."[1]

The preface to the eulogy evokes Wuzhu's teachings and gives the reasons for having a portrait made. It has echoes of Wuzhu's words, but it is in a more polished style than that of the person or persons who wrote the rest of the *Lidai fabao ji*. The preface begins with the words "The mountain man Sun Huan 孫寰 states," which may indicate the author of both the preface and the eulogy. In the preface Wuzhu is referred to as "our teacher," so the writer was apparently a disciple of Wuzhu's. Sun Huan is unknown, but Yanagida suggests that he was a retired scholar. The preface and eulogy include quotations from the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Lunyu*, which are otherwise not featured prominently in the *Lidai fabao ji* except in the section where Wuzhu takes on a group of

[1] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 195c14-15.

Daoists and reinterprets the Daoist and Confucian classics for them.[2] Sichuan was strong in Daoist traditions, having been the seat of the Celestial Master kingdom in the Han dynasty. During the late eighth century, Daoism was a force to be reckoned with around Chengdu, and this is reflected in the length of the *Lidai fabao ji* passage devoted to Wuzhu's dialogue with a group of Daoists and hermits and the passage on the contest with the Daoists within the story of Emperor Ming's dream.[3] Following the preface and eulogy, there is a short concluding description of Wuzhu's death in the classic manner of a Buddhist master, and the style of this concluding passage seems to revert to that of the author/s of the main body of the *Lidai fabao ji*. It is possible that the preface and eulogy are earlier than the rest of the text, if they were in fact written immediately after his death. I include below the entire preface, eulogy, and conclusion.

> The mountain man Sun Huan states: "'The Way is nameless.'[4] Those who awaken to the Way only then know attainment of the origins. The Dharma is featureless, those who recognize the Dharma then penetrate its source. Attaining [the realization that] the origin is precisely the Way, one knows that the essence of the Way is emptiness and birthlessness. Recognizing that the Dharma is the source, one sees that the Dharma nature is perfectly bright and free. Existence is without anything that exists, existence is not the directions of 'that' or 'this.' Birth is without anything that is born, birth is not the limit of being or non-being.
>
> Therefore, the twelve divisions of scripture that Śākyamuni Buddha preached are complete in the mind, so preaching is without anything preached. The eighty-thousand gates of the mound of dust[5] that our Venerable pointed out are the direct teachings of seeing the nature, so pointing-out is without anything to point to. Know even more that the Dharma is separate

[2] *Ibid.*, *T.* 51 (2075) 193b19-194a20.

[3] See Tanaka Ryōshō 1978.

[4] From the *Laozi*.

[5] In other words, expedient means to eradicate defilements.

from the Dharma of verbal preaching, it is not that verbal preaching is unilluminating. The Dharma is separate from the Dharma of seeing and hearing, it is not that seeing and hearing do not make it manifest. 'Rely on words to make the meaning manifest, and having gotten the meaning forget the words.'[6] For this reason, those who follow verbal preaching manifest words and forget the Dharma, while on the contrary those who see and hear forget the words and manifest the Dharma. Without words there is no 'I', without 'I' there is non-doing. The substance of non-doing is suchness, the principle of suchness is not one, not one and no-self, this is truly bodhi. 'Surpassingly pure and bright mind encompasses the Dharmadhātu.'

Just so did our Venerable ground his teachings and transmit his Dharma. He displayed the true meaning of no-thought, not moving and not still. He preached the teaching of sudden awakening, no-recollection and no-thought.[7] He often told his disciples, 'The Dharma is just this, not something verbal preaching can reach. Our Ancestral Master Bodhidharma transmitted these essentials of the Dharma, directly given from one to the next. This is the secret teaching of the Buddhas, this is the Prajñāpāramitā. It is also called the one true meaning, also called the non-dual teaching, also called seeing the nature, also called tathatā, also called nirvāṇa, also called the Chan gate. Names such as these are the provisional teachings of the Buddha-Tathāgatas of the past, the meaning of true reality has no name.'

Sometimes we disciples, obtaining the teaching and practicing according to his words, would get a taste -- and then we would sigh to each other, 'How magnificent! It is like gazing at the empty expanse of the Great Void, without particle or speck of dust. How oceanic! It is as if looking out over the utter limitlessness of the Vast Deep, without boundary or shore. Words do not reach deep knowledge of the Way, the subtle mystery without name. We are full of gratitude toward our Great Master for having pity on our delusion and dullness, for showing us the true Dharma not through gradual steps but directly arriving at bodhi. If we meet other

[6] Based on the *Zhuangzi*. See Watson, trans., 1964: 140.

[7] One might note that the controversial *muwang*, "not-forgetting/not being deluded" is not included here.

students we must turn about and show [the true Dharma], but without the characteristics of our master, how are we to manifest it?'

Accordingly, we secretly summoned a fine artist to paint [our master's] true trace (*zhenji* 真跡). His appearance [in the portrait] is lustrous, his features are fine and successfully realized. Those who gaze at this rendering are able to destroy evil, those who rely on his Dharma are able to attain the mystery. The deeper places [of his Dharma I] have not yet fathomed. Bowing my head to the ground and raising my gaze with reverence, I exert my strength to write this eulogy:

'The highest vehicle of the Dharma is neither principle nor phenomena. The many gates of the good teaching all return to the non-dual. [Mahā]kāśyapa attained it and it spread westward to Buddha-regions, Bodhidharma received it and it flowed eastward to the land of the Han. These are matters spanning over one thousand years, the holy ones for thirty-four generations have directly inherited it one from the other and have passed it down from one to the next. The Dharma they obtained tallies with the Way's source, the robe they transmitted clearly shows true and false. Our teacher secretly received it and graciously displayed it, opening the mysterious gates of the Buddhas and revealing the complete meaning of the Mahāyāna.

Not following being and non-being, not relying on *avyākṛta*,[8] separated from qualities and from characteristics, not 'dull' and not 'wise,' the true meaning is not being or non-being, being and non-being are not the true meaning. Opposite from the mind of the ordinary man, going beyond the intent of the virtuous holy ones, [our] practice exceeds the three vehicles and suddenly leaps over the ten *bhūmis*. It is neither cause nor result, it has neither other nor self. Function is without birth or death, separate from both reflection and essence. Seeing is without bright or dark, no-thought is precisely this.

Accordingly we summoned the fine artist, secretly he made the painting.

[8] This is a technical term from Abhidharma exegesis on the moral qualities of dharmas, meaning morally neutral, not subject to karmic retribution. It is a topic in one of Wuzhu's talks, see Yanagida 1976a: 224.

[The artist] pushed the brush and produced the form, and gazing at the majestic response-body separate from characteristics and emptied of words, we see the expansive vessel of the Dharma. His virtue is like a gift from Heaven, his bones are not like those of this world. How silently mysterious and fine! [The portrait] seems to be truly breathing, the face quivers and wants to speak, the eyes dance and are about to see. 'I look up and it is ever loftier, I venerate and it is ever more dear.'[9] Without our master, this Dharma will sink."

On the third day of the sixth month of the ninth year of the Dali era (774), [Wuzhu] told his disciples, "Bring me a fresh clean robe, I wish to bathe." When he had bathed and put on the fresh clean robe, he asked his disciples, "Is it noon yet?" They answered, "Yes."

He bound all his disciples to a promise: "If you are filial obedient children you will not disobey my words. I am at the point of the great practice. After I am gone you are not to knit your brows [in distress], you are not to act like worldly and unrestrained persons. Those who weep, wear mourning garments, and knit the brows shall not be called my disciples. Weeping is precisely the way of the world, the Buddha Dharma is precisely not doing so. Separated from all characteristics, this is precisely seeing the Buddha."

When he finished speaking he passed away while remaining in a seated position. The Great Master's springs and autumns amounted to sixty-one.[10]

No Dharma heir is named, and the fate of the robe is unmentioned. Instead, the manifestation of Wuzhu's Dharma becomes a painted likeness.

In their article "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China," Griffith Foulk and Robert Sharf explicate the functions of portraits of Chan masters. They describe the typical Chan portrait (*dingxiang* 頂相) as depicting a monk in full monastic robes seated cross-legged in a chair, with his shoes neatly placed on a footstool before

[9] Adaptation of Yan Hui's praise of virtue in the *Lunyu*; see Waley, trans., 1938: 140.

[10] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 195c16-196a26.

him and his right hand holding an implement such as a whisk or staff.[11] Whether or not we envision Wuzhu's portrait as conforming to this iconography of thirteenth-through-sixteenth century Chan portraiture, the question of the significance of his image remains.

References to commemorative portraits of monks during the Six Dynasties period were not unknown, but there are indications that the practice of making portraits of Buddhist masters became increasingly popular in the latter half of the eighth century.[12] As mentioned in Chapter Four, one of Shenhui's criticisms of Puji was that he set up a Hall of Seven Patriarchs (*qizu tang* 七祖堂) and did not include Huineng.[13] Regarding the characteristics of that hall, Foulk and Sharf comment: "We may presume that the texts on these stelae were modeled upon the *Ch'uan fa-pao chi* hagiographies and that the hall contained spirit tablets and/or images for each of the figures enshrined."[14] Other references to Chan patriarchal halls in the eighth century also indicate that they were patterned after ancestral shrines and that there was a close connection between the arrangement of the portraits or tablets in the hall and the configuration of biographies in the Chan sectarian histories.[15]

In the early ninth century, the Japanese monk Kūkai 空海 (774-835) returned to Japan from China with a group of portraits of Chinese masters associated with the Zhenyan 真言 or Tantric school. This group included portraits of Wuzhu's contemporary Bukong 不空 (Amoghavajra, 707-774) and Bukong's Dharma family. The diary of the Japanese monk Ennin's 圓仁 (792-862) travels in China in the mid-eighth century also attests to

[11] Foulk and Sharf 1994: 156.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 163-169.

[13] See p. 238 n. 187.

[14] Foulk and Sharf 1994: 172.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 172-177.

portrait shrines in Tiantai and Tantric cloisters.[16] Both the Tiantai and Tantric schools were active in lineage construction in the latter part of the eighth century, though not so active as the Chan sects.

By commissioning a portrait of their master, the Bao Tang followers were thus participating in a form of worship that was not unknown, but neither was it yet the standard practice that it was to become in the Song 宋 (960-1279), Yuan 元 (1279-1368), and Ming 明 (1368-1644) dynasties.

Wuzhu's portrait seems to be singular, it is not spoken of as being part of a lineage hall. The line of thirty-four patriarchs beginning with Mahākāśyapa is mentioned, and the thirty-fourth is presumably Huineng even though he is not, technically speaking, in the Bao Tang lineage. The ancestral portraits of abbots of later Chan practice seem to hover somewhere on the borderline between special sacred relics and "ordinary" sacred housings for ancestral spirits on the same level as local deities, settling towards the latter plane as time went on.[17] The portrait of Wuzhu seems to reside more in the realm of the special sacred relic. It is presented not in the context of a genealogical pattern, but as a unique site of direct contact with Wuzhu's Dharma. It was perhaps a "death mask" painting for which the artist took the face of the corpse as his model, possibly the reason for the repeated reference to the secrecy of the process. In later Song Chan, this charisma was routinized: "Song monastic rules stipulated that as an abbot approached death, his portrait was to be painted, since a portrait of the deceased was necessary for the upcoming funeral rites . . . . Song biographical chronicles confirm that portraits were indeed produced just prior to or, if need be, soon after an abbot's death."[18]

The eulogy for Wuzhu ends with a chill breath of the "decline of the Dharma"

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 184.

[18] Foulk and Sharf 1994: 186.

sensibility that wafts through the *Lidai fabao ji* as a whole: "Without our master, this Dharma will sink." At the same time, the preface claims powerful magical and soteriological functions for the portrait -- "Those who gaze at this rendering are able to destroy evil, those who rely on his Dharma (i.e. the Dharma that is thus manifested) are able to attain the mystery." As Faure writes of the *śarīra* (relics) and mummies of Chan masters:

> They symbolize (or effect) sudden awakening; the ultimate realization or "transformation" of the saint; a reincorporation into a higher, absolute, ontological plane; but they also achieve mediation for the worshipers by channeling the saint's power and bringing it down to earth. To the extent that this transformative power, ritually activated, allows the practitioner to achieve a spiritual breakthrough, the relics have a soteriological function. As the poet Wang Wei, speaking on behalf of Jingjue's disciples in his epitaph for the deceased Chan master, writes: "We still rely on his *śarīra* in the hope of attaining awakening" (Yanagida 1967: 519). In this sense, as Mus pointed out, the cult of *śarīra* does not so much contradict the notion of *nirvāṇa* as it complements it (Mus 1935: 82-83). Ideally, the relic (or the stūpa) is merely "a temporary support, from which, through a projection impossible to specify, one hopes to leap toward a supreme transcendence" (ibid.: 79). In common practice, however, the virtue of the relics seems to have been predominantly magical -- to bring worldly benefits to the worshiper: the mediation they provide tends to become an end in itself, displacing the ideal of transcendence by the ideology of thaumaturgic immanence."[19]

In the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography of Wuxiang, there is reference to an image of Wuxiang that performed a miracle during the restoration of Buddhism after the persecution of the Huichang 會昌 era (841-846). The Jingzhong monastery had been

[19] Faure 1991: 136-137. On relics and mummies in Chan, see *ibid.*, 132-178.

destroyed, but its bell had been saved from being melted down and was to be moved back to the reconstructed Jingzhong monastery. The bell was returned to its old home with miraculous ease, and it was found that the image of Wuxiang, which had been made by mixing his *śarīra* with clay, was covered with sweat and was thus proved to have been responsible for the bell's quick return.[20]

On the one hand, as Faure points out, it is ironic that a master named Wuxiang 無相 "formless" or "no-characteristics" should then become a form-icon, and it is equally ironic that the Dharma of a master named non-abiding should be considered to abide in his portrait. Yet, as Foulk and Sharf argue, given the *Heart Sūtra* logic that "form is emptiness, emptiness form," then "the very notion of a 'non-representation' can only be signified through representation."[21] The representation signs that it is impossible to render the true image of enlightenment, and at the same time it functions as emptiness functions, as the multi-faceted transformations of *upāya*: "According to the ritual logic of Sung Buddhist monasteries, the icon of the Buddha, the living person of the abbot, and the abbot's portrait were largely interchangeable. It would seem that the body of the living abbot, like his portrait, had come to be regarded as the 'simulacrum' (*hsiang* 像) of Buddhahood."[22] The reference to Wuzhu's portrait as a "response-body" (*yingshen* 應身) is thus an early example of this ritual and soteriological logic. That Wuzhu's disciples did not balk at iconization of their antinomianism is a manifestation of the recovery or revenge of the conventional level that Faure claims was the inevitable "other power" at work within Chan ideology:

> Chan/Zen monks were in fact trying to limit the proliferation of sacred

[20] *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T.* 50 (2061) 832c24-833a3. See Faure 1991: 159.

[21] Foulk and Sharf 1994: 204.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 195.

symbols and to reserve for themselves the privilege of the possession of selected symbols or icons such as *śarīra* and mummies. Their iconoclasm was therefore a relative one, although the most radical among them, carried away by the rhetoric of immediacy, attempted to deny any symbolic mediation. By so doing, however, they tended to forget that the aniconism of early Chan -- another expression of its subitism -- functioned as a ritual inversion and marked the ultimate phase of a process that could not dispense with its preliminary iconic -- and gradualist -- phase without losing its meaning. Even then, they still relied on the notion of a lineage of Chan patriarchs having realized one-by-one the formless truth -- a notion that made sense only in the context of a funerary ideology centered on ancestor worship, an ideology for which every patriarchal generation is only the embodiment of a perennial Dharma, the *lex incarnata*.[23]

Indeed, the Bao Tang followers, with a reputation as being "the most radical among them," may have influenced the form of Chan literary-funerary ritual more than they influenced the shape of formless practice. Foulk and Sharf found that the portrait eulogy (*zhenzan* 真讚) became a standard feature to be included at the end of Song Chan *yulu* (discourse records), but the earliest example they mention dates from the eleventh century.[24] The *Lidai fabao ji* thus seems to have been the earliest Chan work to append an eulogy to a master's portrait at the end of a collection of his discourses. However, the Song portrait "eulogies" were often written by the masters themselves, and this may reflect an incorporation of the *Baolin zhuan* model of transmission, in which each master transmits his Dharma through a gāthā he has composed. Foulk and Sharf demonstrate, however, that contrary to a widespread misapprehension, these portraits were not used as proof of transmission. The written inscription by the master on the portrait established a connection, "enlivening the portrait just as relics were used to enliven sculptural effigies

[23] Faure 1991: 177-178.

[24] Foulk and Sharf 1994: 196.

of Buddhist saints."[25]

The Song autograph portrait eulogies, however, take a *very* different tone: "A mouth like a beggar's open sack; a nose like a shit ladle in the garden! This gentleman troubled himself, applying his talented brush to the completion [of this portrait]."[26] This is indeed a far cry from the Bao Tang followers' appreciation: "How silently mysterious and fine! [The portrait] seems to be truly breathing, the face quivers and wants to speak, the eyes dance and are about to see. 'I look up and it is ever loftier, I venerate and it is ever more dear.'"

Regular offerings and devotions to patriarchal masters became a part of the Chan monastic code in the Song dynasty.[27] Taking a step in this direction, Wuzhu weaned his followers away from devotional practices only to became a focus of devotion himself, both the logical and the paradoxical consequence of the doctrine of intrinsic Buddha-nature. In the subsequent development of Chan, the antinomianism and iconoclasm became ever more antic and literary. Would Wuzhu's teachings have been better served if his disciples' response to his death had been recorded in the following manner?

> When Tzu-ming died, the monks sent a letter to the master, gathered the assembly together, hung the [master's] true image and grieved. . . . [When the memorial offerings were set out, Yang-ch'i] went before the true image, clenched both hands into fists and rested them on top of his head, took his sitting cloth and folded it once, drew a circle [in the air] and burnt incense. He then withdrew three steps and prostrated himself in the manner of a woman 作女人拜.[28]

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 200

[26] *Ibid*, p. 196.

[27] *Ibid*, p. 182-183.

[28] (*T.* 47 (1994) 642b5-13), trans. Foulk and Sharf 1994: 203.

Somehow, I think not -- the eulogy in the *Lidai fabao ji* is less formal.

The Bao Tang in Relation to the Jingzhong School

I will briefly discuss traces of the Bao Tang school after the *Lidai fabao ji*. In this section I will discuss the permutations of Wuxiang's Jingzhong school and connections with Korea and Tibet. In the next section I will discuss connections between the Bao Tang and the Hongzhou schools. At this time, I can do no more than indicate directions for further study.

It is perhaps impossible to tell how long the Bao Tang school survived as an independent Chan line. Most of the ninth century traces involve its closely related rival, the Jingzhong 淨眾 school. Not long after the *Lidai fabao ji* was written the Jingzhong follower Shenqing 神清 (d. *ca*. 814) produced his *Beishan lu* 北山錄 (Record of North Mountain), in which he discredited the *Lidai fabao ji* claim that Wuzhu was a disciple of Wuxiang, criticized its account of the patriarchy, and condemned the antinomian practices of the Bao Tang.[29] Shenqing advocated the "unity of the three schools" (*sanjiao yizhi* 三教一致) rather than strictly Chan teachings. In fact, the eulogy to Wuzhu shows elements of the "unity of the three schools" trend as well. Following the persecution of Buddhism in the mid-ninth century, the reconstructed Jingzhong sect and temple associated with Wuxiang developed a more syncretic and popular character. Sources for the Wuxiang "cult" include Wuxiang's biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and a short piece written by the literatus Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813-858).[30] In the biographies of Korean monks included in the mid-tenth century *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 (Anthology of the

[29] *Beishan lu*, *T*. 52 (2113) 611b & 612c.

[30] *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T*. 50 (2061) 832b-833a; *Tang Zizhou huiyijingshe nanchanyuan sizhengtang beiming* 唐梓州慧義精舍南禪院四證堂碑銘 (Stele Inscription for the Four Exemplars Hall of the Southern Chan Cloister of the Huiyi Monastery in Zizhou, Tang Dynasty), *Sibu beiyao*, Fannan wenji bubian 樊南文集補編 10: 1-24.

Patriarchal Hall) and in Korean stelae, there is evidence of a tradition of pilgrimage to pay homage to Wuxiang's statue at the Jingzhong temple.[31] Chengdu and its environs were under Tibetan occupation during the tenth century, and some Dunhuang Tibetan Buddhist texts include elements of the *Lidai fabao ji* version of Chan history as well as reflections of the cult of Wuxiang.[32]

In the *Lidai fabao ji* it is said that Wuxiang had a special method of chanting the *nianfo* 念佛 at the beginning of his precepts assemblies:

> The Venerable Kim, every twelfth and first month, administered the "receiving of conditions" for countless numbers of people of the four assemblies. The *bodhimaṇḍa* was magnificently arranged, and occupying the high seat [Wuxiang] would expound the Dharma. First, he would lead the vocal repetition of the Buddha's name. When he had exhausted a single breath in recitation [of the Buddha's name], the intoning broke off, the recitation stopped, and then he spoke: 'Non-recollection, no-thought, and not forgetting: Non-recollection is the precepts, no-thought is meditation, and not forgetting is wisdom. These three phrases are the gate of perfectly-maintaining [the precepts].[33]

There may be a connection between Wuxiang's style of chanting and that of the monk Fazhao 法照 (d. 820). Fazhao was a disciple of the Pure Land devotee Chengyuan 承遠 (712-802), who was a disciple of Wuxiang's master Chuji, and Fazhao developed a special method of chanting that was linked with visualization of Amitābha.[34] The

[31] *Zutang ji*, *juan* 17. See Minn 1991.

[32] See Tucci [1958] 1986; Demiéville 1952, 1978, & 1979; Yamaguchi 1973 & 1984; Obata 1974, 1976a & 1976b; Ueyama 1974; Kimura 1981; Broughton 1983; Mala & Kimura 1988.

[33] *Lidai fabao ji*, *T.* 51 (2075) 185a11-15.

[34] Tsukamoto [1933] 1975, & 1976: 559-565; Broughton 1983; Weinstein 1987: 73-74; Stevenson 1996: 203-222.

Jingzhong monastery was primarily associated with Pure Land practices in the ninth century, so Wuxiang's legacy passed to the Pure Land as well as to the Chan school.

The Bao Tang in Relation to the Hongzhou School

There are two Sichuan Chan texts that give evidence of connections between the *Lidai fabao ji* and the Hongzhou 洪州 lineage of Mazu 馬祖 (709-788), namely Zhiju's 智炬 *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (Transmission of the Baolin [Temple]) and the previously discussed *Yuanjue jing dashu chao* of the Chan/Huayan master Zongmi. The *Baolin zhuan*, compiled in 801, is incomplete, but its extant sections prove it to be closely related to the *Lidai fabao ji* in its style and ideology of transmission and its missing section probably had to do with the Hongzhou line. One could surmise that the Bao Tang may have had indirect influence upon Hongzhou school, which was the Chan school which best survived the Buddhist persecution. The Hongzhou founder Mazu was also a native of Sichuan, and there is some controversy over whether Mazu was more influenced by the Korean master Wuxiang or by his putative master, Huairang 懷讓 (677-744). Discussion of this controversy becomes more complex when one takes into account issues of national bias among the twentieth century scholars (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese) who have written about it.[35]

Mazu was the common patriarch of the Linji 臨濟 and Guiyang 潙仰 schools, two of the "Five Houses" of the Sung. The paradigm of Mazu as presented in his biography and the style of his "recorded sayings" reflects, like the *Lidai fabao ji*, a need to find an appropriate form for the sudden teaching, but he mediates between poles of traditional and radical styles that are at once less extreme and also more clearly and confidently on the side of the new. Mazu stressed immanence, non-dual everyday function such as

[35] See Minn 1991, in which he discusses the writings of Hu Shih and of Japanese scholars on the subject, and Yanagida 1978.

simply eating and wearing clothes as an expression of Buddha nature. This neither privileged nor precluded ordination and left more room to adapt existing monastic institutions, unlike the *Lidai fabao ji* denial of formal precepts and practices. Mazu stressed Buddha nature in action as opposed to Wuzhu's antinomian anti-ritualism. This stress on immanence allowed reclamation of the conventional, whereas Wuzhu's antinomian absolutism was bound to fall back to dualism on the symbolic level due to its investment in the inversion of symbols.

The development of a Chan monastic code reflects the adaptations of Mazu's Chan. Mazu's disciple Baizhang 百丈 (749-814) was said to be the founder of the first independent Chan monastery and the first Chan monastic code, the *Qinggui* 清規 (Pure Rules). Although the attribution is probably legend and the code is no longer extant, it is said to be the basis of the later Chan codes used in the Song.[36] Baizhang was therefore considered the founder of Chan monasticism, a complementary figure to Bodhidharma in the patriarch halls of the Song: "Pai-chang was an ideal figure to mediate between two competing notions of lineage: the master-disciple lineage exemplified by the first six patriarchs, and the lineage of abbots related by virtue of the office they held."[37]

In the ninth century there were several competing versions of symbols of authentic transmission. As Faure has shown, the role of mummies and relics was much greater than classic Chan literature would lead us to believe.[38] The *Baolin zhuan* instituted transmission verses, and these verses were included in later biographies even though their esoteric use was abandoned. The *Jingde chuandeng lu* became the accepted history of eighth and ninth century Chan transmission: it has more or less the version of transmission of the robe that is in *Caoqi dashi biezhuan*, patriarchal biographies and

[36] See Hackman 1908; Collcutt 1983; Foulk 1993.

[37] Foulk and Sharf 1994: 182.

[38] See Faure 1991: 132-178; 1992.

transmission verses from the *Baolin zhuan*, and an inclusive notion of Chan affiliation. It represents a coalition among the main Chan "houses" and the absorption of the patriarchal lineages into a genealogy. Thus the tensions inherent in the "kingship" or linear master-disciple model of early Chan were resolved in the more traditional "kinship" model in which the transmission was vested in the structure of the well-defined "gnostic community" rather than in the realization of any single individual.

Conclusion

All of the elements mentioned above -- syncretic doctrines and popular devotional practices, connections with Korea and Tibet, post-persecution opportunities, the rise of the Hongzhou lineage and the development of Chan genealogies -- contributed to the unique character of Sichuan Chan Buddhism. Sichuan Chan became an important source for the styles, traditions, and practices of mainstream Chan of the Song dynasty. Therefore, these regional developments would leave their imprint upon Chinese society as a whole during the era of Chan Buddhism's greatest political and cultural influence. The influence of the Bao Tang upon Sichuan Chan was not negligible. What, in the end, is the transmission of the Bao Tang school?

The doctrine of the formless precepts was not new to the Bao Tang, but in order to discern both the derivative and the innovative aspects of the Bao Tang formless precepts, one has to look at them in the context of sacred performance, the participant-audience of the ordination assembly. In the traditional Vinaya context, senior monks function as preceptors and confirm ordination. In the "bodhisattva precepts" context the practitioner could take the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as preceptors and his or her own visionary reception of a "good sign" as confirmation of efficacy, a visualization ritual that aimed at purification rather than attaining clerical status but that nevertheless undermined the basis of clerical privilege. In the context of Chan, Chan masters as living Buddha functioned

as preceptors, and due to a combination of political circumstances and doctrinal evolution the Chan formless precepts were preached in a context in which people became members of the clergy by buying ordination certificates. In the *Lidai fabao ji*, we have the singular example of a female practitioner tonsuring herself and becoming a nun, functioning all at once as the preceptor, the essence of the precepts, and the audience-recipient.

The precepts were the heart of the role of the monk and the nun, the empowerment that "painted on the eyes" of the icon. The Chan teaching of the formless precepts expressed what had been true all along, that there was no abiding identity of the role of a member of the Saṅgha. In the sudden teaching, one becomes a Buddha because one is a Buddha -- so far so good, but how does one become a monk or nun? In traditional Buddhism, one becomes a monk or nun by vowing to act like one, but in Chan, what is that acting "like?" There is a kind of Catch-22 -- one can only bring life to the role by practicing, rehearsing, and getting it right, but one can only get it right by living it fully all at once. In Chan the art of the role, empowered by ritual, became the living source of likeness.

Ritual studies show us that the elaboration of ritual is serendipitous and yet at the same time keeps within certain bounds that are extremely difficult to define. In this regard we might return briefly to the two versions of Wuxiang's three phrases -- non-recollection, no-thought, and not forgetting. Wuzhu's elaboration "not being deluded" creates a likeness of his master by changing his master, whom he may never have met and yet still, as he claimed, may have always been with. This kind of replication-in-alteration of the master role became in time a highly ritualized system of allusions.

In Donald Sutton's study of contemporary ritual performers in Taiwan, he examines the evolution of the troupe's ritual performance forms over a period of time. After describing the performance and its contexts, he reiterates the questions that have informed the study and proposes some of his answers:

> If officialdom does not standardize in post-Qing Taiwan, what does? Why does change keep within fixed bounds, even when in myth, iconographic interpretation, ritual, and choreography, innovation and fluidity are the rule? What, in other words, keeps innovation consistent with the underlying logic of the Jiajiang described above? The deliberate traditionalism of local religion, asserting old ways in spite of modernity, is only part of the answer; after all, participating alongside the Jiajiang at festivals are comic troupes that show heavy influence from modern commercial and industrial values (Liu 1986, Sutton 1990a). What is specifically traditionalist about the Jiajiang is that they are not just performers before the gods but also escorts and exorcisers on their behalf. As divine agents they must keep their actions and appearance ritualized in order to convey the requisite weight and importance. To persuade, ritual has to remind us of what we already know in our bones.[39]

He goes on to say that the agent of both standardization and innovation in creating the "requisite weight and importance" of the ritual performance is plural, is a relationship: the relationship between the community temple, the troupe leader as performance master and purveyor of ritual services, and the festival marketplace for performances.[40] I would suggest that late eighth century Chan standardization and innovation developed out of an analogous relationship between community temple, i.e. the established local religious institutions; the Chan master and his troupe of disciples; and the marketplace for religious performance, especially mass ordination ritual performance. This is not meant to be reductive; as Sutton says, ritual reminds us of what we already know in our bones. The performance master reminds us not to forget non-recollection and no-thought, and "at the time of true no-thought, no-thought itself is not." The performance connects the gods to the costumes and masks of the actors, the Dharma to the portrait, the flesh to bones.

[39] Sutton 1996: 242.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 243.

Wuzhu's robe is a costume for being possessed by the patriarchs, by the transmission of no-thought. Shenhui imbued the robe with mind-to-mind transmission so the two are as emptiness and form, nondual. The *Lidai fabao ji* author/s re-introduced a seam between robe and Dharma by having Bodhidharma say that the robe is like a dynastic talisman, but only where there are false monks is such an external symbol needed. This seam allows one to see the internal pressures of Southern School ideology more clearly. That is, it allows one to see the tension between unmediated identity of self-nature and the Dharma, and the continued need to negotiate the relationship between community temple, the Chan master and his troupe, and the religious marketplace.

The *Lidai fabao ji*'s imperfect seams enable a different view of the "Golden Age" of Chan, for in it we can see the stitches binding different levels of discourse and the unmatched edges between the ultimate, mythical, local, and political patches of Bodhidharma's costume are more clearly revealed. Must these gaps expose a lack of integrity, or anyway a lack of sophistication, a vulgarization of Daoxuan's Jetavana opera and Shenhui's pageant of the patriarchy? The Bao Tang can certainly be seen as engaged in Buddhist business as usual, wearing a cloak of disinterestedness in order to attract secular elites, the consumers in the religious marketplace, and then turning patronage to advantage in a factional rivalry with other performance troupes.

At this distance it becomes impossible to distinguish transparent rhetoric from formless practice, but it is also impossible to know what is thereby hidden, and what is revealed. If indeed the Bao Tang practiced no-thought to the extent of dispensing with the costumes, masks, and script so that their own separate status as clergy all but disappeared, this renders them unique in the history of Buddhist monasticism. Bao Tang antinomianism was lost in the mainstream of Chan, repudiated but nevertheless imparting a subtle pervasive flavor, perhaps a warning about the necessary limits of the ultimate teaching. Wuzhu and his robe would seem to be not-recollected, only to reappear in

surprising guises.

To belabor a favorite metaphor one last time, the *Lidai fabao ji* has much in common with the emperor's new clothes -- it reveals vanity and courage, the ridiculous and the radical, the deluded and denuded. The unthinkable became the costume of wisdom, and unlike other robes of the gods this one could not be removed. The *Lidai fabao ji* shows that it is impossible to separate jade from grit, robe from patriarch, and the Triple Jewel from flesh and bone. Perhaps the ultimate fate of Bodhidharma's robe is that Wuzhu is wearing it in his portrait.

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